The International
Crosby Circle Presents

BING

Edited by REG BRISTO

Christmas

1976

NO 44

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REG BRISTO.

THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

HON. PRESIDENT:
BING CROSBY.

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These are the names which figure prominently in the pages of this magazine and in the various projects undertaken in the cause of Crosbyana.

All these officers join me, REG BRISTO, in wishing all members a wonderful Christmas and a happy and prosperous 1977 - despite the portents, away dull care! - and may you all continue to find pleasure interest and FRIENDSHIP in the Bond of Crosbyana.

And at this particular time we must, once more, record our thanks and admiration, for the tremendous efforts of KEN BARNES and ROBERT PATERSON, both of whom have achieved the unlikely if not, as some thought, the impossible - Ken with his brilliant new recordings of Bing, and Mr. Paterson by actually bringing the dreams of thousands to reality by presenting Bing, extremely live, in Britain. They are largely responsible for bringing not only pleasure, but a tremendous new impetus, to the wonderful world of Bing and his countless admirers.

The listing above of the principal officers with their addresses will be found most useful by a large number of members. But in no way does it reflect on the many not named - the general members - who by their support and interest keep The International Crosby Circle the friendly and interesting group it is.

HAPPY CHRISTMAS!

FRANK MURPHY AND JOHN JOYCE

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With Christmas

Merry Christmas

May the Best of Everything

Come Your Way in the

New Year

Pizza

COMING ON....

BING: The official organ of
THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE:
Produced & Edited by
REG BRISTO, 7, Greenmeadow Close,
CWMBRAN, GWENT, NP4 3NR.

Hon. President:
BING CROSBY.

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and more KEEPING TRACK we hope at the end!

News, events, thick and fast...as you read this Bing is doing a two-week show at the Uris Theatre, New York...it was actually announced in a trade paper here he would be touring Germany! Now put back to 1977....we have a real Noel story, too - Noel Mould with Bing's Irish appearance....Les Gaylor did a full hour on his own on Radio Solent on October 18 presenting Bing's records with accompanying chat; Noel already mentioned did the same in N. Ireland....We have no detailed reports of the Newcastle Convention but everyone who went states it was tremendous....Former Secretary FRANK MURPHY has sparked into life again in his old style; he's doing a Newcastle broadcast for Christmas Eve during which Bing is expected to come thro' on the telephone! The day before that Frank is doing no less than a 4-hour show on Radio Tyneside tracing Bing's 50-year recording career....and already Frank has dates for Crosby meetings lined up throughout 1977! A leaflet enclosed with this issue gives details...

THE NEW DESIGN TIES ARE READY: £1.50p post paid from THE BADGE CENTRE, ROPERGATE, PONTEFRACT, YORKS...you'll get them for Christmas presents if you're sharp....

We're still staggered and aghast that the Palladium show was NOT video-taped for TV... a grievous and short-sighted omission. A once-in-a-century event not recorded - visually - for posterity.....and what went wrong with the Palladium double-album? Ken Barnes's dream of end-July release was obviously shattered; it was delayed, we feel, even too long for the real Christmas market. Quite astonishing.... Sorry to tell you that our tape expert/consultant/supplier BOB ROBERTS has had a spell in hospital. We trust he is out by now and feeling well - but its thrown his correspondence and his activities into some confusion. This will explain things...and his wife Vera tells me that coping single-handed with the shop has made life very hectic for her - hence their usual greetings will be absent this year. Get well soon, Bob.

And talking of Bob Roberts a word about our "art" this time: not much to complain about, we feel - with the exception of the "trio" picture facing page 40! An effort was made to reproduce this in response to many requests at Leeds (wonderful event!) It started life as a Polaroid, courtesy of Phil Clarke, and while reasonable in that form, had to undergo much stress before we got what you see. Best we could do; but I can assure you that I (Reg Bristo) do not look nearly so Satanic, nor Bob so shadowy, as this picture shows. In fact, we're quite a decent couple of blokes, really! And Tony Harrison's portrait of Bing will make up for its shortcomings, we hope.....

And if Christmas comes - as it will - can Spring be far behind? 'Fraid it can... the worst part of the winter, probably - so have a wonderful Christmas and brace yourselves; in fact, SPRING MAY BE A LITTLE LATE THIS YEAR....and that's Bing saying, or rather, singing it!

Oh, a final word: send in plenty of radio requests for Bing's new albums - you have plenty of friends to whom they may be dedicated....and our thanks to all members, every last one of them, for their continuing interest and support throughout the past wonderful Bing year.....

Chestnuts roasting on an open fire; Jack Frost nipping at your nose....

May be, may be not - best put another log on the fire in case; as this is penned it may well turn out to be something we love to hear sung about - a WHITE CHRISTMAS - but do not particularly want to experience. At least, not if you are of an age that remembers Bing from 1931/32! If you get the pained subtlety....on the other hand, a white Christmas will save a bit of expense for those who in this day and age like to go to Switzerland or Austria to break their limbs. They will be able to stay home and break them - more inexpensively.

And while we're waxing lyrical we could give a thought to one of Bing's Christmas songs which, unusually for such a composition, draws particular attention to our own particular circumstances in this agitated world:

"And in despair I bowed my head - there is no peace on earth I said,
For hate is strong and mocks the song of peace on earth....."

Grim...matching our times; peace of a kind (in places at least) but the feeling we're living on a razor's edge; newspapers and TV correspondents seeming to take a positive delight in telling us each day how many more thousands of jobs that are to disappear or at best - are at risk.. inflation...decimalisation, metrication, new counties, new boroughs... a "pop" group mouthing obscenities into our very living rooms....vices turned virtues....ugh...

Let's cast our minds back - and it won't be difficult - as we still manage to enjoy what, according to the signs, will be our last joyful Yuletide unless we do this that and the other, pull in our belts, lower our standards of living, switch the Governments around in case one can wave a magic wand and banish unemployment, inflation, balance of payments (adverse of course)...which of course, they cannot do....

Oh no, its much more pleasant, sitting by the fire, or turning up the central heating, to cast our minds back those few short months when the temperature was in the eighties and nineties (remember?) and we were desperate for water...and Bing was in Britain, immaculate, cool, tireless, in incredibly fine voice, and altogether putting an entirely different aspect to this tired old Britain....and when he finished what surely must have been an exhausting stint at the Palladium, he was illuminating the golf courses, and the race-courses, and driving round our countryside - which incidentally, come what may, still takes some matching - and then popping into the Decca studios to record, again in that persistent heat, that beautiful surprise packet FEELS GOOD...in three or four days at that, forsooth!

And soon the calendar will click over to show its 1977 and 1976 slips into past history; but it can never become an ordinary year. It had, and will retain, its own special magic - its Crosby magic.

And, what of the New Year? Well, Bing has intimated in a letter to one of our members that he will be back here; Kathryn in one of her delightful letters has told another member that "all the family loves Britain..." It will be too much to think, leave alone guarantee, a summer like we've had this year - best for a couple of centuries so some told us - but let's hope (especially now the water pundits have changed their tune and say there will be NO shortage in 1977 whatever the drought) it is good enough to sustain the Crosbys in their love of Britain. One of our real "stinkers" of a summer can turn anyone away.....

We feel Bing is too much of an American to uproot himself...but suppose, just suppose, he decided to live in Britain! Its a wonderful thought; we've felt for years Bing belongs here...and it would be wonderful to have him - and his family here. But wherever he is - we'll continue to regard him with respect, admiration - and tremendous affection.

WHITE CHRISTMASES OF LONG AGO

BY BING

From the age of two, right up to the time I was old enough to leave home, we lived in a wood-frame house in Spokane, Washington, near the borders of Idaho and Canada. The address was 508 Sharp Avenue. It was a friendly town where nobody was extremely rich and few were very poor. Farming country, mainly, with a lot of logging and mining besides. Population then was around 100,000 though I gather that the total is nearer a quarter-million now.

In the summers, the temperature soared into the 90's, and in the winter it could drop to 14 below. The snow came down about late November and lingered on till March. Around Christmas time it was sometimes five or six feet deep, so at night the reflection of the moon kind of lit up the ceiling of the bedroom which I shared with my brother Ted.

There were seven of us altogether - five boys and two girls. I was born fourth. Dad was a book-keeper at the Inland Brewery.

"CHRISTMAS COOKING SMELLS - CINNAMON AND GINGER" -

He didn't get paid very much, but around town he was known as Good Time Harry because he never worried about a thing - just so long as he had enough to buy records for the phonograph, or cylinders to start with, because I'm talking now of 60 to 65 years ago.

My mother, whose parents came from Ireland, was very beautiful but also very stern. She lived till she was 93. To the very end she wouldn't tolerate her daughters smoking cigarettes in her presence, even though by then they were grandmothers themselves!

At Christmas, as at all other times really, Mother ran things. I remember the whole, wonderfully exciting rigmarole used to start about two weeks before the great day. I'd usually be out, busy skating and sledging. The first I'd notice would be the mouth-watering smells coming from the kitchen - sultanas, cinnamon and giner.

Mother was a great cook. She could make wonderful dishes out of the most meagre resources. I remember she made a couple of dishes I've never seen prepared any place else. One was pork chops, onions and scalloped potatoes in a big casserole. The other was made with cornmeal, chopped-up pieces of pork and tasty pickles.

But for Christmas dinner we had turkey. Unless things were bad, in which case we had chicken. Or very bad, in which case we had to make do with goose.

There was no pocket-money doled out in the Crosby home. Mother said, "We will always provide our children with a place to sleep and as good food as we can on your father's income. But when it comes to entertainments you provide your own, and after you're 12 you purchase your own clothes."

It didn't seem hard. Nothing seemed so hard in those days. Christmas was a very happy time in our household, and you just had to work a little harder to get the money to buy presents.

They weren't <u>big</u> presents - though with a family of eight besides myself, there did seem an awful lot of them! We didn't have much, and we didn't give much, but what we did have seemed marvellous to us.

I used to earn my cents and dollars by doing a variety of chores - chopping wood and clearing away the snow from our neighbours' front doors.

For several weeks before one particular Christmas, I got up before five every morning to walk one-and-a-half miles to a place called Everyman's Club - a sort of skid-row for out-of-work miners and loggers. My jobs was mopping out and generally tidying up. After I'd finished I'd try to get to Mass by 6.30 and school by 8.30.

Christmas trees were never any problem. The whole country round Spokane was thick with forests of pine and spruce, between them lie shiny buttons of frozen lakes. When you wanted a tree, you just went out and got yourself one.

My brothers and I used to go to a forest only a short distance away from the house, pick out a nice sturdy spruce that wasn't too bushy or too straggly and, most important of all, not too tall to get into our living room.

Then, when we got back home, we'd have to put up with the hollering and yelling from Mother about not messing up the place and knocking things over.

The decorations - the baubles and the tinsel chains - were kept in a cardboard box and came out every year. Each one was separately stored in cotton wool. They weren't plastic, like nowadays, but of a kind of shiny painted glass. If you were unlucky enough to drop one, it broke into so many tiny pieces that, even after sweeping, you'd go around for days seeing specks of silver in the carpet.

Mother didn't like breakages, especially around Christmas when every penny counted. Perhaps not for breaking Christmas decorations but for other things, like disobedience, she'd try to get Dad to punish us. But he never would. Mother frequently took the strap or the back of a hair-brush to our backsides. But no Dad. As soon as he saw the trouble brewing he'd slip out the back door and not come home till it was all over. Or he'd plead for us: "I'm sure the boy didn't mean it. He's probably just sickening for something." Which meant we were prescribed a dose of castor oil. I preferred the hair-brush any day!

MY FAMILY NEVER GOT ME INTO A RED COAT AND WHISKERS:

Christmas Day and the days either side were special - for family only. The only thing that didn't change even then was Dad's attitude to money. When Mother plagued him about unpaid bills he never got ruffled. He'd just puff at his pipe and murmur: "Don't worry Kate. Everything'll work out all right." And, it always did.

Like most families, I suppose, we had our traditions, the most important of which was the secrecy surrounding the presents we were giving and receiving. You could ask for what you wanted months beforehand, but you never got even a hint of what was inside the package until the wrapping was torn off on Christmas morning.

First you had to buy your present, then you had to sneak it into the house without any of your brothers or sisters seeing it. Finally you had to find a place - the back of a drawer full of clothes, or the top of a high wardrobe - to hide it.

Dad never played Santa Claus - I think he must have realised that after three we saw through all that stuff - and none of my own family ever got me into a red coat and whiskers. But we always hung up our stockings

up over the mantelpiece on Christmas Eve.

Nowadays you can get ready-packaged plastic stockings - shame, because I'm sure the old way of hanging up a sock and finding it the next morning bulging with an apple, an orange, and a trinket or toy was much more fun.

I can tell you, on Christmas Eve the whole houseused to be electric with suppressed excitement. And we weren't allowed to go to bed because Midnight Mass came first. Around 11.30 you'd see the whole Crosby family emerge from 508 Sharp Avenue. And, led by Mother, we would trudge over the snow to the Jesuit church just a block and a half away.

We all sang in the choir - though after a couple of lessons from a "professor" who wanted me to give up the popular stuff and practice breath control and tone production I lost all interest in singing solo.

When we got back home again after Mass each of us chased off to our secret hiding-places to retrieve our presents. Then, one by one, we placed them under the tree. As soon as everyone had done this, the door was closed and no-one under pain of dreadful punishment was allowed to re-enter the room until after breakfast the following morning.

The waiting was agony, I remember. Lying in bed, unable to get to sleep, I used to stare out the window at the stars in the frozen black sky and pray that I'd been given the present I'd asked for.

When I was 10 I'd asked for a flexible flyer, and didn't get it. When I was 11 I did the same, and was again unlucky. The family budget just couldn't stretch to it.

THERE UNDER THE TREE WAS THE PRESENT I'D LONGED FOR:

To those who are not up on these things, perhaps I had better explain that a flexible flyer is - or certainly was - the most beautiful, sleek, desirable sled (small sledge) that money could buy. I'd seen other kids skimming over the snow on flexible flyers and my heart was set on doing the same. On my twelfth Christmas I got one! There it was under the tree - the latest model. Unique steering apparatus, hollow-ground runners and a shining varnished seat that, if your partner was prepared to sit close, would take two. I tell you, within five minutes of getting it I was out of the house - just as soon as I'd said my thanOyous....

There's a hill not far from Sharp Avenue called Ledgerwood. It was the best place in the neighbourhood for tobogganning, with a run of almost a mile-and-a-half. There were houses to one side of the hill and horse-drawn wagons used to deliver coal up there. All you had to do was hitch your sled to the back axle and get a free tow to the top of the hill.

I don't suppose that there were carts delivering coal on Christmas Day itself, so I don't recall how I got up the hill on that first morning with my sled. But I can still remember that first wonderful, exhilarating, day, skimming down the slopes, breathing in the sharp air and looking down over the whole spread of town below with the blue smoke rising from a thousand chimneys.

I remember, too, I had as company my first girlfriend! Gladys Lemmon. She must be a grandmother by now. Maybe even a great grandmother. I have to tell you though, nothing much happened between us on the Christmas Day when I was twelve. Mostly I wanted her as extra weight on my sled; you can gather more speed that way....

I don't know if they still do it, but in the old days they used to have a

bonfire every Christmas on Ledgerwood Hill. It was so big it used to burn for a couple of weeks at least. It would die down at night and get built up again the next morning.

All the kids from six to 16 used to stay up there on top of the hill from early morning till way after it was dark and the lights were twinkling in the town below.

DAD WENT INTO HOCK TO BUY THE PIANO:

We'd roast potatoes and marshmallows, and burn our faces pink in the heat. Sometimes Dad would have to trudge up the hill to get ahold of us and bring us back home for five o'clock dinner.

Mother would have the meal all laid out, nice and pretty. There'd be logs in the grate, and a red-hot poker ready to warm the red wine - even as children we were allowed to have a glass on Christmas Day. The turkey - when we could afford one - would be carried in, shoulder-high on a large platter, and we'd all give a cheer, say grace, and tuck in.

Afterwards there'd be mince pies - always mince pies - and pumpkin pie and a fruit concoction called ambrosia - oranges, peaches, tangerines, all sliced up and coated with coconut.

Then, after the dishes were washed up and put away, we'd gather round the piano to sing carols. That piano was famous in the family - Dad had gone into hock to buy it!

My sisters took turns to play, Dad plinked away on a mandolin and he and Mother led the singing. She had a sweet, clear, voice and Dad sang in amateur Gilbert and Sullivan productions.

We always sang the same old favourites - Adeste Fidelis, God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen and so on - very much the same as my own family does today. In fact, over the years the traditions haven't changed all that much in our family.

We still don't open our presents till after breakfast. I still make sure the children note down who they get every gift from and write their thank-you letters. The tree is bigger - generally about 10 feet high - and we don't go out and chop it down ourselves any more....

STILL DREAMING OF A WHITE CHRISTMAS:

But the same old decorations come out year after year. Not, I fear, the same ones we used when I was a child - I wonder whatever happened to that tarnished old star that always went on top of the tree - but ones that the children have made themselves.

On Christmas Day the whole family gathers at our house in San Francisco. Sometimes, with all the children, grandchildren, aunties and uncles, we have a party of over 60. Right up until the end Mother used to come. She'd hand out presents, always something practical, and tell me I shouldn't make movies with Frank Sinatra (she couldn't discount those stories about the Mafia).

Just occasionally, we'd stand by the window, Mother and I, and look out on the lush lawns of Beverly Hills - still green - where we used to live, and we'd agree:

CHRISTMAS WITH THE FAMILY WAS MARVELLOUS ANYWHERE. BUT WHEN YOU CAME DOWN TO IT, WE DID MISS THE SNOW, THE WHITE CHRISTMASES WE USED TO KNOW.....

Editor: Thus, Christmas 60 years ago....our grateful acknowledgements to the writer of this story - and to Bing. The writer was Douglas Keay. Its tempting to say they don't have Christmases like that any more. Well, no quite like that perhaps but thankfully, despite the pressures, despite the commercial exploitation, inflation, the balance of payments, and sundry other daily disasters to which we have now become accustomed (it seems), things do stand still for a couple of days and the magic of Christmas is still with us. Perhaps the chestnuts seldom roast round an open fire, and the family piano has given way to the telly...and we seldom hear the bells on Christmas Day, even tho' they be pre-recorded and amplified from the belfrys because campanology has become a nearly lost art....Christmas retains its magic. It still doesn't take long, sitting drowsily replete by a log-fire, to dream up the stagecoach arriving with the steaming horses....Mr. Pickwick with face all shiny exuding genial hospitality and urging punch upon us....the kids with pink faces making their slides....my oh my, we're dreaming already....

But it IS the Christmases of long ago that come to mind, particularly if one has come from a large family....Christmases long past; and as always, Bing is the master-stirrer of memories. I recall the big preparations in our house 50 years ago were not, curiously, the making of the Christmas puddings, but the making of the ginger-wine a month or three weeks before the holiday. That was quite traditional in our family: and even odder, it was Dad who was the maker - or perhaps the brewer!

He had this magical formula - a list of ingredients - which was kept for years and years in a Bluebird toffee tin on the mantelpiece and consulted just once a year. Either me or one of my sisters would have the important, if not awesome task, of going to the shops with this list and obtaining the necessary constituents of this special ginger-wine. Apart from the ginger and - I am almost certain, tartaric acid! - I cannot, alas, remember the items that were needed....

Dad would fuss with all the diligence of a demented professor of advanced chemistry....and we were banned from the kitchen until the magical moment arrived and we were bidden in - to taste the ginger-wine. Sometimes something had gone wrong, however, and we kids would be charging round the house with a cold-water flannel clutched to our tongues! Dad would scratch his chin reflectively, make some adjustments, and hey presto! perfect the taste in some way. And it really was a good festive drink....non-alcoholic, I imagine, for we used to drink it by the pint, I remember. Dad didn't stick to ginger-wine, naturally.....

The things that come to mind when you start thinking of Christmases long past.....

But of course, missing from those Christmases of long ago - although, come to think of it, not from many of them - was the voice of Crosby... the voice which has come to be virtually synonymous with the Yuletide season. I'm sure many members are wondering what the 12-year-old Bing's version of ADESTE FIDELIS sounded like? Its one "take" we're never going to hear! No matter what diligence the researchers employ...

What is certain is that none of that large, and obviously happy, Crosby family, knew in those days what a new dimension their brother Bing was going to add to Christmas. Happily, they all lived to experience Bing's warming and brilliant contribution to the world's enjoyment of Christmas. The writer of that article said: "Just listening to Bing talk gave the feeling of being curled up in front of a log-fire, gazing at the flames as they licked round the wood..." Indeed it would. And, it would seem, the "flexible flyer" stopped Bing squeezing that Lemmon! I should think so - at 12 years of age.

ROUNDHAY CROSBYANA

THE LEEDS GET-TOGETHER

The annual pilgrimage to Leeds for the dinner-party-meeting was undertaken by more members than ever this year on October 17 last - so the result was a foregone conclusion, surely. With excellent surroundings, kindred spirits - and a wealth of Crosbyana how could it be otherwise?

Its little short of amazing that so many people from so many parts of the British Isles - from Hastings on the South coast to Inverness in the North of Scotland - can wend their way to Leeds in Yorkshire and arrive almost dead on time! As I pointed out in what may very loosely be termed my address, it was most gratifying that so many people had attended, bearing in mind the onerous journeys many of them had to make - not to mention the not inconsiderable expense of such an excursion. It speaks volumes surely for the bond that exists between the true admirers of the peerless Bing. Kindred souls partaking of the activities they like best - talking to one another, talking Crosbyana....

The Yorkshire weather was kind - until late in the evening when rain set in. I am tempted to say that by that time it didn't matter too much but I am certain that would not be true for the poor soul who I discovered wrestling with a jammed starter-motor in quite heavy rain! As we expected, it was a typical English autumn day, showing the lovely park of Roundhay in all its many-hued beauty and with its walking-accompaniment of the rustle of shed leaves.

Michael Crampton had spent his usual 2-3 weeks of hectic activity making the arrangements at the Mansion Hotel, fixing up the overnight accommodation where necessary, and generally smoothing things out for the big day. As we discovered last year, the Mansion really is a most congenial venue for these occasions - we found out, even, that it has a ghost which obligingly postponed its appearance - it is understood - until half-an-hour after our last guests departed! A wide sweeping staircase, handsomely balustrated, takes us up to a large and comfortable lounge.

As indicated, formalities were kept to a minimum - some words from Mike Crampton in the form of a general welcome to everyone and thence to yours truly. My first job, naturally, was to endorse that welcome - and to accord the thanks indubitably (as Frank Murphy might say) due to Mike for his great efforts. Not only for this year's highly successful event, but for his inspiration and initiative in getting the whole thing going eleven years ago.

I had to go on to say that despite our intentions, we had no "star" guest celebrities - but this was because of the most excellent reasons. On the Thursday before the Sunday of the meeting, I had a letter from Ken Barnes, excusing himself from attending, with great regret - but for a very satisfactory reason! I read the relevant part of Mr. Barnes's letter as follows:

"As you know, I was hoping to get to your annual meeting on Sunday but some important business has cropped up which necessitates my flying off to California today (Thurs. Oct. 14). THE INITIAL REASON FOR MY TRIP IS TO ADD BING'S VOCALS TO THE ORCHESTRAL TRACKS WHICH WE MADE IN LONDON AT THE END OF AUGUST. Although this album will not be issued until next year, we are hoping to have a single out before Christmas. The song in question is WHEN A CHILD IS BORN, and I have never been so confident of any Crosby song (as far as the hit-parade goes) since THAT'S WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT.

(Cont...

Unfortunately, there are two other versions on the market - one by Ethna Campbell and the other by Johnn Mathis - but to my mind the song is tailor-made for Bing, and we have a magnificently effective arrangement by Pete Moore which is superior in every way to the other arrangements of the song. Strictly speaking, it is not a Christmas song, but I can't think of a better time of the year to release it.

As if this news were not enough, the Palladium albym is almost set for release through K-Tel (the TV marketing people who did such a great job on Perry Como last year). THERE HAS BEEN SOME CONJECTURE AS TO WHETHER THIS ALBUM SHOULD BE ISSUED AS A TWO-LP SET OR MERELY AS A SINGLE DISC LP. I FELT THAT MUCH OF THE IMPACT WOULD BE LOST (AS WELL AS THE FINE CONTRIBUTIONS OF OTHER ARTISTS LIKE ROSIE CLOONEY AND JOE BUSHKIN AND THE FAMILY) BY CUTTING IT DOWN. I AM HAPPY TO SAY THAT BING FEELS THE SAME WAY AND IS INSISTING ON THE COMPLETE ALBUM BEING ISSUED. And unless something else happens this is the way it will be released - hopefully around November 12.

Bing has agreed to do a TV-commercial to promote the album and K-Tel will be flying a camera crew from Canada to San Francisco where Bing will do the "promo" on the local golf course. A nice touch, don't you think?

Well, that's all for now, except to wish you and all the ICC members an enjoyable and successful meeting. Please accept my apologies for not being able to get along. My regards.....Ken Barnes."

Well, much as we enjoyed Ken's delightful and unassuming company, we gladly excused his absence on such a mission! We subsequently had "progress" reports from Ken and these appear in the KEEPING TRACK feature of this issue.

As can be imagined, the possibility of the "live" Palladium recordings being cut to one LP was received with consternation by the members though Ken's reassurance restored matters somewhat! It would indeed be a shame if those historic recordings were not made available to us in as complete a form as possible. It is shocking enough, I went on, to learn that, after all, Bing's Palladium show was NOT video-taped, or telerecorded, for subsequent viewing. That such a momentous series of concerts was not placed on record, if only for posterity, is an omission of the grossest kind and reflects no credit at all on either the BBC or ITA. So the recordings Ken supervised bear the full weight of historical onus.

Pete Moore accompanied Ken so we were without his anticipated appearance. Not to worry - there were over 70 people there with the one common bond - Bing. This is, of course, only a fraction of the membership but nevertheless, they represented a tremendous effort in the way of travelling/expense to be there - as I've mentioned above.

BING'S ITINERARY WHEN IN BRITAIN:

I had received just prior to the Leeds meeting a letter from a member - one of several on the same subject incidentally - asking if it would be possible for us to give a detailed time-table of Bing's itinerary when visiting us. It would certainly be possible; and we'd love to do it. But it just isn't possible. We get no prior information except what Bing lets slip in miscellaneous letters to members, e.g. I shall be at Gleneagles, or Wentwood; or we'll be in Scotland for Kathryn to appear at Ochertyre and so on. But nothing comes from the Crosby office officially. This appeared to surprise some members.

But the position is that, these days, while Bing accepts publicity - accepts it

gracefully and not ungratefully. But he doesn't court it. Naturally, I feel. Bing obviously loves to have time to roam around if and when he can - like when Yorkshire readers were chagrined to find out he had actually been in on of their "locals"! Not only that, he sang in it! He was tomring around with Harry or Nathaniel, obviously keenly showing the youngsters something of the glories of the English countryside. Hence no time-table or schedule of events. In the days of the late Larry Crosby we did get short notes on Bing's intended activities but seldom nowadays for the reason I have given.

Not only that, but I feel that much of Bing's timetable is actually unplanned! Naturally, he would arrange in advance which golf tournaments he will play in - and obviously his recording dates and so on. But having fulfilled them, I know Bing just loves to get around Britain. And if this involves him with totally unexpected meetings with "fans" it is an unexpected and always delightful bonus for them. That's the situation.

And on this occasion, I reported, it was almost impossible to keep track of his activities. He was reported variously as being in Spain, France - and even back in the States. And this was certainly true for immediately before the Leeds event we had word that Bing had got very much involved with the HURRICAN LIZA which devastated areas of Mexico. Thanks to JEAN PAUL FREREAULT our prominent Canadian member we can present one newspaper of Bing's quite dramatic involvement in the disaster:

"BING CROSBY TELLS OF HORROR WHEN HURRICAN LIZA HIT"

For Bing Crosby, the drama began when he flew into La Paz to visit his ranch nearby. He and his chauffeur set out in a station wagon when the first rain began to fall. Bing told The Star: "We were sure we could make the 60 miles without any trouble, but then a car coming toward us flagged us down." The driver warned them to turn back because, he said, a big storm was on the way.

Bing returned to La Paz, where they booked into a newly-opened hotel, the El Presidente. "They gave me a room on the seventh floor and I was there exactly four hours before the eye of the storm struck, " Bing said. "Immediately the room was ankle-deep in water from the rain which smashed through the windows.

"The management got all the guests down to the basement discotheque and gave us flashlights and candles.

"It made me sick to hear about the devastation outside. The people who died weren't just statistics because I knew a lot of them, particularly the kids. We sometimes come to La Paz to shop and the boys and girls and some of the old people would follow me around. I used to buy them fruits and candies and I knew a lot of their names. They just knew me as Bing.

"It was frustrating to just sit in the basement and not be able to do anything to help. We were unable to drink the water because it was contaminated and there was only beer to drink. Some people cleaned their teeth in it."

Robert Castillo, general manager of El Presidente, said: "Bing was a perfect guest. He would not accept any special treatment and just wanted to be treated like everyone else. He kept everybody's spirits up when they were in the discotheque and he was a great asset to us."

Before he left in the morning somebody asked him if he would sing a song for them. "Standing in the hotel lobby, he obliged them. There were only half a dozen people there for his very special concert and they all applauded him madly."

Later, on his way to the airport, the singer saw the aftermath of Hurrican Liza. "I saw what was left of houses and shops, all sunk in a sea of mud," he said. "I think everyone of us on board that plane was saying prayers."

It seems evident that if that thoughtful motorist hadn't stopped to turn Bing around he could have been at considerable risk for you will remember that hundreds of people were swept away "never to be seen again, swept out to sea, when floods were whipped by a wind of 160 miles an hour, and carved a path of death through the wooden huts of La Paz..." The official death role by the Mexican government was 433 but local sources calculated it could have been 4,000.

To return to the Leeds event, however, we hit on a happy format to the "record request" feature which had been causing some pondering. Intending guests are always invited to send in a request; subsequently their requests are linked together with a commentary by Mick Drury and the whole thing provided a highly entertaining listening spot. But as the number of guests grew this was proved virtually impossible. Seventy records, usually playing for around 3 minutes each, and not including Mick's indispensable commentary, would carve 210 minutes, or 3 hours 30 minutes out of the time available! A marathon feat for the listeners, and certainly for poor Mick! So, the idea of a "draw" was decided upon: from all the guests' requests, eight were drawn out of the hat and on these Mick based his programme. True, the majority of visitors are disappointed but something had to be done and this seemed a reasonably fair way.

It could be argued that this method would, and did, provide an interesting guide as to what a small cross-section of Bing people would choose. In the event it ran out as follows:

KEN HOYLE (Harrogate): MANY HAPPY RETURNS OF THE DAY

(There was a cogent reason for this choice, as we learned from Mick's intro; it was the unflappable Ken's birthday. Whether he was 42 or a 102 I can't remember. I DO know he has looked his same, cheerful, self for the past eleven years!)

RON NEWTON (Telford, Salop): WHERE THE MORNIN' GLORIES GROW - from the "new" album, of course.

IAN ARNOTT (Inverness): CABARET - also from the "new" album.

CHARLIE TUPPER (Epsom, Surrey): THAT SLY OLD GENTLEMAN. - a 1939 choice.

ARNOLD POPE (Manchester): IF I HAD MY WAY - an avowedly 30's man sticking to his decade - just! A 1939 recording.

TOMMY SMITH (Lothersdale, Keighley): DOWN BY THE RIVER - what a lovely old number this is....1935

HOWARD ROWLEY (Codnor, Derbyshire): STRAIGHT DOWN THE MIDDLE - the elusive golfing song of 1957, still to appear on album.

TONY HARRISON (Hastings, Susex): SOMETHING TO REMEMBER YOU BY....1975

Mick appropriately rounded off his presentation with a record for those people unable to be present and those who had been unlucky in the "draw". He chose that grand finale reprise of THAT'S WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT. And it rounded off an excellent spot in great style.

So, there were four records from the Thirties; one from 1957 and four from 1975. Nicely balanced perhaps - tho' it will be argued by the "decade" specialists that the ages of the requesters would be relevant! It would certainly be intriguing to know if this balance would be maintained throughout the whole membership.

We also had films at Leeds & and these presented a similar problem as regards time. ROY CHAPPELL, our singer "with a touch of the Bings" brought his projectors and the film BLUE SKIES. Roy deserves a special vote of thanks for he speedily found out that presenting a film in a hotel is a vastly different proposition

from presenting a film from, say, the projection-room of the Gaumont Palace. Nevertheless, Roy and his colleague overcame the difficulties and we were able to see those two "immortals" - Bing and Fred Astaire - in typical, rhythmic, action.

The Mack Sennett short, BLUE OF THE NIGHT, was also shewn. These Sennetts never lose their appeal; dated the sets may be, stilted may be the acting, but the voice of Bing is, surely, at its superb best in these (then) inconspicuous comedy shorts.

Frank Murphy had brought along what turned out to be a graphic newsreel of Bing outside the Palladium last June. It was approaching professional class and enabled us to see not only Bing, but Frank himself, Johnny Jones (Ireland), John Joyce, Gateshead, and Les Mackin, Blyth, Northumberland...all in sound, too! Frank had a few words on the film with the chauffeur who was driving Bing around and - predictably perhaps - he reaffirmed that "Bing was a perfect gentleman...."

Frank, by the way, is offering copies of this unique film, complete with sound, and you should write to him (see page 2 for his address) for details.

> The meal itself was served in the way we have come to expect from the Mansion - dead on time when called for, hot, appetising, and speedily dispensed.
>
> Frank Murphy was called upon to propose the toast: BING! This he did in fine style, taking the opportunity to quote a nice summing up of the past 50 years in the Crosby career.

Mentioning individuals from such a crowd of nice people is perhaps invidious, but I am certain all those present would like us to single out MRS. ENA HOOLEY. You read of her astonishing day in London in July when she journeyed up - alone - from Winchester to see Bing at the Palladium from which, alas, she had to depart precipately - like Cinderella as she herself described it - to get her taxi to Waterloo in order to catch her last train home. During the day she had also taken the opportunity to visit the Institute for the Deaf and the RSPCA! I was astonished - and delighted - when she wrote and said she was coming to Leeds! And come she did and proved a most popular guest. Ena subsequently wrote to me: "It's been a real Bing year for me. I'm so glad I came to Leeds for Crosby people are so NICE; Mr. and Mrs. Throp and Tony Harrison, as well as you and Michael, were all so kind to me. I don't know when I last enjoyed myself so much. I'm sure all the excitement of the last year has been good for me. Its had me at the top of my form, in health ways, I mean I feel really good. I would like to thank all the people who made me so welcome and made me feel so much at home."

A remarkable lady, is Ena Hooley. And a charming one, too. The following week she actually travelled to Newcastle for Frank Murphy's convention!

I omitted to mention above that, because of the time factor, our viewers were rather startled when we showed the first and last reels of BLUE SKIES! Not much in the way of continuity, you may think, but plenty of music and rhythm. As indicated, time was the enemy but it will be appreciated we got in a fair allocation of quite a number of items.

It was indeed a highly enjoyable affair - so enjoyable it illustrated again how unfortunate it is that ALL of us cannot get together more often and for a longer time when we do manage to do it. We had a real galaxy of talent there too - and tho' a prominent member has been heard to declare "we come here to hear Bing!" it might be an excellent idea to take advantage of the talents of Roy Chappell, Frank Wilgaus, Adrienne Dodds and others in our ranks on future occasions!

CROSBY QUOTES - 1976

A collection of some of the typical Crosbyisms made by Bing in interviews during the remarkable year just ending.....and some by Kathryn....

Of his first recording: "It was done in a warehouse, there were a lot of packing cases around - nothing like the studios today with their engineered acoustics. It was a song called I'VE GOT THE GIRL. When you hear it now it sounds like a couple of chipmunks."

Of Paul Whiteman: "I had a peckhorn, like a flugelhorn. I got so I fooled around a little. When Whiteman was playing big things like RHAPSODY IN BLUE where there was a lot of brass I'd put in a little wrrrnnk-wrrrnnk all out of tune. Finally he said: 'Jeez, I've gotta do something about you, you're lousing up my band.' So he got me a violin with rubber strings and then I could really pour it on and produce no sound at all...

Of those Whiteman days: "I was travelling with guys who were my idols. Like Bix Beiderbecke, the Dorsey Brothers, Joe Venuti, Eddie Lang, Benny Goodman, Pee Wee Russell, Bunny Berigan. It didn't seem like work to me. I thought it was the greatest thing in the world to be in that. In fact, I even roomed with Bix on the road.."

Of "White Christmas": "If I remember rightly, the gal had given me the air. I'd been trying to run some nightclubs which had been named after different holidays and this one was a failure, and I'm just sitting alone and played this little song. They stuck a few violins under it, but there was no production, no one thought it was anything special - it seemed a nice tune and it fitted the mood. And then we made a record of it, John Scott Trotter made the arrangement. It was during the war and a lot of people were away. It just became the HOME, SWEET HOME of the period. Everywhere I went in Europe the troops, no matter where, had to hear it and sometimes it was kind of poignant, because some of them cried and I'd get dewy-eyed just looking at their faces...."

Of his colour-blindness: "A green light looks grey to me, I don't see anything green. Once in a while I get socks that don't match - my wife has a lot of fun with that..."

Of his retirement: "Starting June round to THIS June I will have worked 90 days in 365. That's not altogether retired..."

Of his career: "Gee, if I was a singer now from Spokane, Washington - I wouldn't get a job! I'd be very lucky, singing as I did then...."

About Bing at home: "He has a dictaphone and speaks into it non-stop. I'm sure he hasn't set eyes on his secretary for ten years (Kathryn).

About Bing and golf: "I took up golf three years ago. I'm awful. And to Bing, golf is an art. He may regard me as his ideal partner for life, but that doesn't extend to the golf-course.." (Kathryn).

About life at home: "What else can I tell you about Bing? He's a quiet man. Never gets worked up. He loves flowers and likes to roam around the garden. For some reason he's nervous of swimming pools..." (Kathryn).

At the recording session with Fred Astaire when Ken Barnes insisted on six takes before satisfaction: "Well, we were all right. It must be some minor adjustments to the machinery..."

On not being recognised whilst riding (strap-hanging) on the New York subway: "I used to have shows at the Brooklyn Paramount and at the New York Paramount at the same time, I would take the subway back and forth and there was never any trouble..."

On the race-track: "You're bound to lose if you bet every race..."

On stage in Britain: "I'm very happy these days just to have a pulse..."

On landing at Heathrow: "I would never consider retiring. I would get too bored. I plan to sing for ever...."

On hearing that ticket "touts" had somehow got hold of tickets for his Palladium shows: "I'm as mad as I'll ever get...it's a darn shame, especially when the whole thing is for charity. Frankly, there's nothing anyone can do..it always happens."

Again, on arrival at London Airport: ""I will be playing one or two charity golf matches as well as doing TV. I do not know where we will be staying. We will probably end up at the Seaman's Rescue Mission...."

On the music scene: "I make no bones that I hanker for the old days of music, where you could find melody and good lyrics. A lot of today's electronic stuff doesn't get to me, but that's not to say its no good. I tell you. I'm just a singer. I don't know about anything else. I have no instinct for a song - can't pick out a potential hit from all the others. Same in the studios. I don't understand the technical equipment so I have to leave it to others to guide me through. People say I've been around a long time, so I must know something about the art of survival, but the answer is that I've always had the very best advice at all levels of the business...people look after my money, my songs, my work schedule, even the membership of my golf clubs. That's all it is. Its the guys who try to do the whole thing themselves who don't last the race.

And again on the music scene: "I'm not knocking the rock and roll scene, with the songs of protest. That's always been around. Guys like Johnny Cash pleading in song for prison reform and that kind of thing. Its not the music, its the general breakdown of standards which leads to rot setting in. But I'm an American here in London and believe me we have nothing to be proud of back home. We're in no position to preach to anybody else..."

On big bands: "My brother Bob, who used to run a jazz band called the Bobcats, is proving there's a following for the big band. He goes out along with two other old-time bandleaders, Frankie Carle and Freddy Martin, and they play to huge crowds of teenagers who just like to dance in the old style..."

On saying farewell to one interviewer: "Just call me a lucky son-of-a-gun. Lucky because I've been well paid for doing what I'd have gladly done for nothing."

On comment that he had never acted on stage: "I nearly did a Broadway musical once - but I lost my nerve...."

On composing songs: "Oh no, I never could do that. I could hum you a few tunes, but I never wrote anything. I figured I'd be better not to press my luck. The most I ever did was fix up the lyrics...I'll never have a hit again. I'm confident of that. There's no chance. I'll keep on singing as long as there's a market and as long as the voice doesn't alter much. I'd just like to do a job now and then, and keep in touch with the industry. Its been my life for 50 years. It's been a long, long pull and I've had great results. I can't complain if it stops tomorrow...."

CONNEE BOSWELL

obituary

A Christmas issue, alas, despite the intentions, cannot be all festive, much as we would like it. And it is certain that the passing of Connee Boswell must be recorded in these pages, not only because of her own considerable reputation and career, but also because she was a very real part of the incredible Crosby career.

Like Paul Whiteman, Gus Arnheim, the Mills Brothers, the Rhythm Boys, Connie Boswell takes her honourable place in this illustrious early-Crosby company.

In terms of titles recorded she was not prolific it might be said, but what she did record with Bing was telling and she was one of the first examples of the rapport that Bing seemed to strike so easily with singing partners, bringing the best out of them and completing the rapport with some of his finest efforts. True Bing did duet with Loyce Whiteman and no doubt several other young ladies in the early days but Connie Boswell was the first significant recording duettist with Bing and first trod the path that, later on, would be followed by Trudy Erwin, Frances Langford, Rosemary Clooney, the Andrews Sisters and others.

That Connie was the soloist and "leader" of the celebrated Boswell Sisters is well known. With her sisters, Martha and Vet, the Boswell Sisters, it might be said, were among the first "generation" of radio and recording worldwide stars. And here perhaps we should remark on the two spellings of her first name. After being known as "Connie" in the early years of her career, she suddenly changed the spelling to "Connee".

Long ill, Connie died of stomach cancer on October 10 last; a grievous end to a melodious life surely, for it is reported that Connie finally requested her doctors not to try and prolong her life. For that reason they ceased the chemo-therapy treatment she had been undergoing. Her death took place at Mount Sinai Hospital, New York.

Connie Boswell's life was a courageous one in any case. As a result of polio she spent most of her life in a wheel-chair, having caught that dread disease when she was no more than three years of age. She was born into a musical family and by the age of five was finding that she could easily play the piano; almost as soon she was adept on the cello. She arranged for, and inspired hersisters, and the trio became prolific record-sellers.

But Connie herself did considerable solo work; she also appeared with many top-line bands and is claimed to be one of the most imitated female singers.

With her sisters she was in THE BIG BROADCAST (1932), Bing's first major film, along with the other top radio performers of the time. In this film they sang SHOUT SISTER SHOUT and CRAZY PEOPLE. Later on Connie guested with Bing on the Kraft Music Hall show. It was also reported that Bing and Bob Hope had kept in touch with her during her illness.

It was on April 13, 1932, that the Boswell Sisters appeared first on record with Bing - in fact, as a trio they made this single appearance - on LAWD YOU MADE THE NIGHT TOO LONG, of which only a truncated version is available to most of us. The orchestra was that of Don Redman. More than five years then elapsed before Connie only recorded again with Bing.

Connie finally appeared on a Crosby record - and a remarkable one at that - in 1952, so that their association on record last twenty years.

The list of records with Bing is as follows; it might be claimed that all of them are collectors' pieces:

Lawd You Made the Night Too Long.	13.4.32	(Boswell Sisters)
Basin Street Blues.	25.7.37	(Connie only)
Bob White.	"	"
Start the Day Right.	22.6.39	"
An Apple for the Teacher.	"	"
Between 18th & 19th on Chestnut Street.	15.12.39	"
Tea for Two.	] ,2.40.	"
Yes Indeed!	"	"
That's A'Plenty.	17.11.52	"

With the exception of the 1932 recording, John Scott Trotter was the accompanying MD.

All of these records display an inherent instinct for a jazz approach which fully complemented Bing. And Connie often illustrated her capacity for ad-libbing in a style "right up the street" of Mr. C. "Miss Constance" and "Mr. Birgstance" come immediately to mind. Another highlight was Bing's "trombone" solo while Connie sang the lyric on Basin St. Blues.

THAT'S A'PLENTY is somewhat different as it was a radio performance subsequently issued by Decca; the exact date of the performance is not known and the date given is the date it was given a "master" number. A remarkable effort for this number was always regarded purely as a swing, or jazz, number and it is no mean feat on the part of both Bing and Connie to fit lyrics to a difficult, fast-tempo, melody. Bing achieved the same sort of success some time later with The Andrews Sisters and SOUTH RAMPART ST. PARADE.

The Boswell Sisters did, as you would expect, have a huge following of fans in their own right quite apart from any association with Bing. Several albums of their songs have been reissued, notably on Decca's Ace of Hearts (AH 116) with "Nothing Was Sweeter Than the Boswell Sisters", and more recently, that album with further titles, was reissued in the new Vocalion series of "Nostalgia" (VLP 5). Both these albums contain HEEBIE JEEBIES which was very big for the Boswell Sisters. They did indeed combine melody with a rhythm that was in advance of their time.

While it would seem Connie's singing days were long over before her death, her passing removes yet another personage from the fabric of the Crosby story. And this lady of song played a very real part in that story. We mourn her passing.

"It was Christmas Day, 1945....and time for Reveille at the Army transit camp at Milan; a cheerless Christmas. Someone had an inspiration - and over the public address system of this extensive camp came booming through the darkness the voice of BING CROSBY singing "Silent Night".

We said someone had an inspiration and we mean it. For when you haven't been home for more than 4 years and transport troubles hold you up when you should have been sitting by the fire for Christmas....then a touch like this can make a difference. But note, it was BING. The universal voice of Crosby that gave the message.... and somehow it WAS Christmas, after all...."

From a war biography of 1952.

This really excellent study of Bing was drawn by our member, TONY HARRISON, of 68 Lower Park Road, Hastings, in Sussex. Taken from a photograph Tony has nevertheless caught the authentic expression of the contemporary Bing. We are delighted to present Tony's artistic effort, exclusively for BING.

MATTERS DISCOGRAPHIC

Recording research aspects by JOHN BASSETT, to whom items attaching thereto should be sent. They are always welcome and it is known that such details of Bing's recording efforts are of abiding interest to a large number of members.

An anomaly has arisen concerning the track I'M SORRY DEAR as used on the recent 12 UK Vocalion (Decca) album, MANY HAPPY RETURNS (VLP 1). Although the sleeve notes show this master to be take "A", aural examination reveals this to be at variance with information published by the compilers of the ROAD discography. Their findings were as follows:

E37440-A-B I'm Sorry Dear. Br 6226 (A) (B) 3 Dec. 1931.
(1) BR-E 1270(A) (B)
AH-E AH 40 (b)

NOTES:
(1) Br-E 1270. Both takes were used on this issue but the take letter and master number were not shown in the wax of most of the pressings.

ALTERNATE TAKE NOTES: Positive identification can be made by comparison of the underlined words in the following lines:

Take A "I know I don't deserve the word of sympathy"
"Make up for all your sad days"

Take B "I know I don't deserve one word of sympathy"
"Make up for all those sad days"

From the number of copies we have examined of Br-E 1270, it would appear that the "B" take is by far the more common of the two takes issued on this label. As a general guide, we have not discovered an "A" take on the issues with the bottom of the label in the quarter circle inscribed "Warner-Brunswick Ltd", but two "B" takes have been found on the label inscribed "Brunswick Ltd." It does not follow, however, that the "A" take was never issued on the former label.

(With acknowledgements to the compilers).

Many collectors have been misled by the appearance of a so-called "take-A" of SOFT LIGHTS AND SWEET MUSIC as featured on two microgroove issues, namely the recent JAZUM LP and a privately-produced album of Australian origin. Having made a thorough aural examination of these pressings, our findings show that both items are actually take-B, being identical to the known take-B of the original US Brunswick issue, 20106. Consequently, the only genuine alternative take can be found on the US Biograph album, BING CROSBY - RARE EARLY RECORDINGS, and this is shown as take-C. An alternative take identification was published in BING No. 32, December 1973.

To summarise:

	Take Shown as	Actual Take
Brunswick 20106	-B	-B
Pelican LP	-B	-B
Biograph LP	-C	-C (or -A) *
Jazum LP	-A	-B
Australian LP	-A	-B

* At the time of writing, it is not known how much research BIOGRAPH carried out on this matter, but less they had positive proof that they were using a C take, knowing that the previous issue was take-B, they may have simply used

a logical progression - in which case it could be the authentic take-A.

Editor: As is well known, among my many blind-spots is certainly one to do with discographical research. They often read like a Stanley Unwin effort to me - but that is undoubtedly my loss! Differences in takes have to be very obvious for me to jump and say "That's different! Eureka!" But in the case of I'M SORRY DEAR, seems to me the compilers of THE ROAD covered themselves adequately by concluding that both takes were issued and not identified?

But back to research: a less statistical contribution from ALF MUTTER (Lymington, Hants) -

> I don't know whether its been pointed out before but have you noticed that Bing gets the words wrong in his recording of GALWAY BAY? I've suspected this for some time, but I have proved it to my own satisfaction last week-end when I listened to another artist - Denis Noble - sing it. Bing sings the last line of the second verse on the FIRST verse, and the last line of the first verse on the second verse. Only a small point but its of interest.

Editor: I'm no sufficiently versed (Whoops! I honestly didn't mean that) in the verse of this song but I'm sure Alf is right. But a thing that always strikes me about this song is the adroit way Bing (and no doubt other artists) change the line "...and the English came and tried to teach us their ways" to "the strangers came &c." Its nice to be liked!

While we're on particular records, many, many people have written to say that Bing does indeed sing "Boo, Boo, Boo" on JUST ONE MORE CHANCE; a lady was recently asking whether Bing did indeed ever perpetrate this in the way so beloved of comic-imitators, they were too polite to say so but the inference was clearly that I should open my lug-'oles! If I may be so irreverent!

But, no, I was well acquainted with this 1931 record, naturally, but in deference to these correspondents, I've listened to it several times recently and in my ears Bing sings something - as best one can put it into words - this: "Mmmmm... bu-bu-bol...." Not Boo-Boo-Boo. Perhaps its the nearest he gets to the boo. We've all long been very much aware of the la-la-la, bol-bol, mmm and other ad libs and tricks Bing uses - all part of his incredible individuality.

ARNOLD POPE (Middleton, Manchester) gets us back on the "take-theme": Recently acquiring the WORLD RECORDS "BING'S EVERGREENS", I find it interesting that DOWN BY THE OLD MILL STREAM - never before on microgroove - is a different take from the 78rpm Brunswick 02807. The matrix number for this title is DLA 1724 and the 78 has "A" stamped in the wax after it so obviously its take-A on the 78. I presume the LP track put out by WORLD RECORDS recently is take-B.

The difference in the takes is minor but can be noted in the way Bing sings the word "blue" (with your eyes of Blue) in the first chorus. Also there are slight changes in the instrumentation in the up-tempo middle part, especially immediately after the line "it was there I knew" sung by the Foursome.

Another point concerning this EVERGREENS LP is that the recording date for IDA, SWEET AS APPLE CIDER is given as 1952 when in fact it should be 1939. Actually, both these aforementioned titles are from the same recording session in March 1939.

Editor: Hmmm...well there were takes A and B of MILL STREAM; until Arnold's discovery take-B had only been issued on American Decca DE 25492. And Bing did record IDA again in 1952, with "Red" Nichols featured on cornet. Indubitably however, as Arnold says, despite the 1952 date on the sleeve of WORLD RECORDS "BING'S EVERGREENS", it is the 1939 version of IDA that is used.

1926 ═══ 1976

It was a very happy, as well as fantastic, circumstance that Bing was in Britain in the year he completed 50 years of recording; not strictly true, perhaps, for Bing had departed by the time the actual date of October 18 arrived....but, near enough! The "old warehouse" recording studio with Don Clark and Al Rinker in 1926 - and after scaling every height in the entertainment world, that long and brilliant path led Bing, against all our expectations, to London, Edinburgh and Dublin! Already its history, of course. We dealt in depth with these historic happenings in the last (September) issue of BING to the extent that one of the "newer fellas" (who also admires one of the "newer fellas" if you follow me!) asked, in a letter, "what do you fill up BING with when Bing isn't at the Palladium?"

We had to point out that this was a really memorable, unique occasion - for Bing doesn't make annual farewell appearances.....we certainly hope the concerts that Britain enjoyed in the summer of 1976 will in no sense be "farewell" appearances and that we can look forward to seeing more and more of the Maestro.

The concentration, however, was on London and its famous Palladium so itsno less than fair - and extremely interesting - that in this issue we present the unique experience of an Irish member - NOEL MOULD. And unique his experience certainly was, for here is Noel's story - and what better name could we have for our Christmas issue?

Noel writes: 1976 is the year which I, in company with thousands of others, shall remember to the day I die....and could it have been a better year? - with Bing celebrating his 50 years of recording? It was also MY first year as a radio broadcaster! But that means I must explain....

Earlier in the year, I had planned a programme to celebrate this striking event to coincide with the actual recording date, 18th October 1926 (1976). My idea was that the programme would be put out by Northern Ireland's Downtown Radio on that date between 10 and 11 pm. And so it was...it came to pass. But before it came to pass a lot of things happened; some of them not unexpected. But some of them totally unexpected and the most fantastic of all those events was actually witnessed by many hundreds of people, including my fellow countryman member of ICC - Barry Adams.

To begin with, I made the pilgrimage to London to see the Palladium show on 24 June - not without some palpitations for the ticket situation appeared alarming. But Bert Bishop who has done, and continues to do, so much on the Bing front, had arranged things for me. The Palladium scene was, of course, thoroughly covered in these pages, and rightly so, but I feel I must add a comment before passing on to my main story. With everyone else I could no more than marvel at how incredibly well the old master looked and how beautifully he still sings as his magnificent and well-loved voice echoed around the great auditorium. I say to myself: "Noel - how privileged you are to be present at one of these historic concerts - actually seeing this living legend, Bing Crosby!"

Now I can jump forward - to July 11th on the Hermitage golf course in Dublin. This turned out to be the first of two incredible days for me. Barry Adams, his charming wife Irish and I set out for the 120-mile drive to Dublin on, surprisingly, a very wet Sunday morning - yes, a WET Sunday morning in the glorious summer of 1976. Our drive was accompanied all the way by the voice of Bing in the car - FOR LOVE ALONE, IN THE MISSION BY THE SEA, WHAT WILL I TELL MY HEART? and so many other lovely Crosby songs. An appropriate way, surely, to drive for an appointment with Bing?

> Arrived at the course, our first glimpse of Bing came when a large black limousine, flanked by two police outriders, came to a halt at the club-house. The door of the car opened and out stepped Bing, dressed in a pair of check slacks, the coat he wore on his TOP OF THE POPS appearance and a new straw hat; a red cardigan was thrown nonchalantly over his left shoulder. I took some pictures at this point before Bing walked into the club to change. We made for the first tee, where I met George O'Reilly, Bing's representative in Ireland, as previously arranged. George had already mentioned to Bing, apparently, my idea for the radio programme and told me that Bing was quite agreeable - time permitting.

When Bing arrived George formally introduced us and, would you believe it, Bing remembered me from our last meetings (recalled in an issue or two back of this magazine). I told him how much I had enjoyed the Palladium show and he was very interested in my views. Then Bing, in response to requests, posed for some more pictures - my goodness me, how automatic is this request whenever Bing appears! Then he told the "gallery" a joke about him and Bob Hope playing a game of golf and after telling me he would "catch" me later, the game was under way.

As we walked round with him we were chatting from time to time and I asked him about the interview. "Sure," said Bing, "what do you want me to do?" I gave hima short script to look at and during the next couple of holes he continued to read it. Needless to say, I was most happy and excited at his obvious interest.

I should mention that Bing was playing Christie O'Connor - another fine gentleman, by the way, and around the 9th, right out of the blue, Bing did a quite remarkable thing. After teeing off he came straight over to me and said: "You want to do it now?"

> "Sure Bing," I exclaimed. "Come on Noel then, follow me." Clearly the large gallery were wondering what was going on - as was Christie! I followed Bing to his golf car. "Hope on the back," said Bing, "and we'll go somewhere quiet." I needed no further invitation and was aboard that car in a flash. We drove off, away from the crowd, towards a clump of trees. I looked back and saw Christie O'Connor as puzzled as anyone, scratching his head!

My heart was thumping as we set off from the crowd, some of whom were actually sprinting after us. I tell you, here and now, I felt like a Roman Emperor on his chariot! And I also felt as proud as a peacock.

When we stopped I stepped around to Bing and started the interview: "On behalf of all the people in Northern Ireland to whom you have given so much pleasure throughout the years, I welcome you to Downtown Radio."

"Oh, you're very kind," said Bing, "I welcome this opportunity to say Hello to all my friends in Northern Ireland and indeed to listeners on Downtown Radio..I believe you're putting out a programme about the half-century that I've been stealing money!

"18th October, 1926, was your first recording Bing - I'VE GOT THE GIRL...."

"Have you?" joked Bing. "There was another fella in there somewhere...."

"Al Rinker, of course," I said. "Hmmmmm," answered Bing, "here's a little song I think you'll like..... Goodbye all..." "The little song" of course, was to be inserted when the programme actually went out over the air.

And that was it! The interview could hardly have been briefer; but it was still a wonderful experience. Bing dashed back to the game with Christie, while I played back what had been said. It was great and I was very happy with it. For when I planned my anniversary programme I never even considered that I might include a "live" Bing.

We managed quite a bit of conversation thereafter, going round the green - I even cracked a joke with Bing. Among the things we spoke of was the Twenties and I took up something with Bing, something that has always interested me. Johnny Joyce (of Willenhall, . of course) sent me a tape of circa 1944 on which a disc-jockey introduced what he called a "collectors' item" - Bing Crosby along with another unknown singer (Al Rinker) singing with Ben Bernie's Orchestra in the year 1926.... I must admit, listening to this, that it sounds not unlike Bing. But there is, of course, no mention of this in any "history", catalogue, discography or anything else. "No way," said Bing when I mentioned this recording. "If I had recorded with Ben Bernie in 1926 I would certainly remember it - besides which, I was in California in 1926, Bernie was on the West Coast."

> The record has been discussed from time to time in Crosby circles and magazines and while no conclusion was ever reached, the belief was that it could not have been Bing. Bing's reaction to my raising the matter would seem to put all doubts to one side. It wasn't Bing with Bernie in 1926.

At the end of the game Bing was at his usual chore signing albums, photographs, posing for more of them - taken as he was having a drink at the clubhouse. The last I saw of him on that occasion was when the limousine called to take him back to his hotel - off he went, with the drink still in his hand.

AT THE GAIETY - FOR REHEARSAL

The next day was, of course, the 12th July - the day of Bing's concert at the Gaiety Theatre in Dublin. I had tickets for the show and found it necessary to set off myself to find a hotel as I was stopping over. Incidentally, I learned at the golf course that Bing was actually doing a hotel cabaret show that night, but I learned much too late to do anything about THAT.

But, thanks to George O'Reilly, I was able to attend the rehearsal for the Gaiety show. The show did, of course, follow the pattern of the Palladium performances I had already seen - but seeing the rehearsal was quite different and certainly a fascinating experience. One difference between this show and the Palladium was, alas, that it was not preceded by that fascinating newsreel shot of Bing in the 1944 Stagedoor Canteen.

I took my seat, unobtrusively, at the back of the stalls, while the band was on stage tuning up, and lots of other activity going on...Kathy was dancing around, limbering up as it were...the two lads came on stage, very casually dressed - chips off the old block, I thought...microphones were being placed at strategic points... and then there was Bing himself dressed in a short-sleeved sports shirt and the inevitable straw hat, and making much of putting out the microphones, checking the light changes and the "spots", clearly very thorough, very concerned. And for me it was all pure magic!

Before long Bing sat himself on a tall stool and took the mike in hand; the band started up on SEND IN THE CLOWNS and after a false start, Bing went on to sing it all through without further hitch. He did however, sing the final two bars again, and nonchalantly commented: OK - I'll buy that. It'll do... What's next?" Next was SLOW BOAT TO CHINA, and naturally, on came Rose Clooney. Again, there was a false start or two and then they had it all together and went right thro' it faultlessly.

Kathy joined Bing to rehearse MY CUP RUNNETH OVER but there were no problems, straight thro' without a hitch. Bing next put THE WAY WE WERE through its paces again faultlessly and I began to wonder why they bothered to rehearse! True, Bing sang the last couple of lines again but I saw no need for it. I should mention that throughout these rehearsal proceedings, Bing was joking all the time - with the band boys, his family and the other artists, and all sorts of hands and technicians milling about on the stage. And what was very apparent was that everyone was enjoying themselves, Bing most of all - and he was in top form.

Bing kept singing snatches even between the songs, throwing in plenty of "boo, boo boo's" to the obvious delight of everyone there. At one stage he walked to the front of the stage, which sloped quite steeply to the orchestra pit, and seemed to be appraising it. "Better not get too close here," called Bing to Kathy, who was dispensing sweets from an enormous bag, "a guy could go on his ass down there..."

Following a break the whole family rehearsed the ROW, ROW, ROW routine, right down to the last detail....next Bing called on Ted Rogers and proceeded to swap cracks with him in great style, finally going into GONE FISHIN' - after which the whole band applauded! I wanted to join in but would have felt rather conspicuous being one of only three people in the auditorium.

Bing left the stage at this point - only to appear moments later through a side-door to sit down where I was in the stalls, viewing the stage and the general set-up. He looked at me and grinned: "You again!" he said. "Oh yes, I stayed overnight for the show, Bing." "Well, I certainly hope you enjoy it, Noel," beamed Bing as he returned to the stage.

It was the Palladium scene repeated in Dublin in the evening...crowds of people, tremendous excitement in the air...and the tickets for this show were £10 each. But it turned out that when everyone was in their seats you could get in for a pound, standing room only. And a large number of people took advantage of this with the result that, unlike the Usher Hall I understand, the Gaiety in Dublin was really packed to the doors.

As I've indicated, the show was much the same as the Palladium efforts with just minor differences. When Bing came on the reception was just as unbelievable as in London, as was the thunderous ovation at the end. And there were not a few misty eyes about, I can tell you. Once again there was that curious crowding round the theatre, with hundreds of people obviously desirous of catching a glimpse of Bing as he left, the desire to call out "Thanks Bing!" - and to wish him well. This spontaneous warmth towards Bing really is remarkable, wherever, seemingly, he appears.

MY RADIO PROGRAMME: My next task, with my head full of the tremendous events of the 11 and 12th of July, was to get down to my radio programme. It was recorded on 2nd October and, being my first effort, was another memorable experience. Tremendous amount of spadework...getting the format right, when the records came in, the part records, the interview with Bing I did at the golf course... the producer showed me how the extracts of records had to be put on "cartridges", all labelled up, recorded on their "jingle" machines...it all proved so time-consuming I decided to cut out the extracts and play the full records - and of course, these had to be put out in their correct order, checked and re-checked... no end to it. But the time came when I was sat on a stool myself in front of a microphone, which they proceeded to test..and Hey Presto! off we went.

To introduce the programme I used I'VE GOT TO SING A TORCH SONG over which I spoke during the orchestral part of the record: "To celebrate this, his 50th year in the recording industry, Downtown Radio is proud to present the most popular singer the world has ever known -Ladies and Gentlemen: we welcome Bing Crosby!" TORCH SONG was then tastefully faded out to be replaced by WHERE THE BLUE OF THE NIGHT, the 1931 version.

Thus we embarked on a journey through the years with Bing during which I hoped the older folks would have their memories stirred and the younger listeners would get a new awareness of just what Bing Crosby had been - and still was. We used the interview of the golf-course and followed it with part of I'VE GOT THE GIRL. Songs, or part of, played included LOVABLE; PLEASE; DOWN BY THE RIVER; SAILOR BEWARE; A FINE ROMANCE; THE WAY YOU LOOK TONIGHT; BASIN ST. BLUES; PENNIES FROM HEAVEN; I'M AN OLD COWHAND; SWEET HAWAIIAN CHIMES; BROTHER CAN YOU SPARE A DIME; YOU ARE MY SUNSHINE; (BING AND AL) MEDLEY OF RADIO SONGS - PRETTY GIRL IS LIKE A MELODY, BEST THINGS IN LIFE ARE FREE, WAITING ON THE ROBERT E LEE & ROSIE;

GONE FISHIN'; LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR; (a fitting song for our Province),CABARET; AT MY TIME OF LIFE to finish with I'VE GOT TO SING A TORCH SONG.....

"BING, THE FIRST 50 YEARS WAS INTRODUCED BY NOEL MOULD..." Thus it ended.

Needless to say, I used what I hope were appropriate introductions to all the songs given above; remarking on the date and any special circumstance and often I used Bing's own words from his autobiography set to introduce the songs. I have no doubt other collectors will say "Why didn't you include...." or "Why did you have that one in....?" But I had to consider that the programme had to be aimed at the public in general and not just the dedicated Bing fans. Anyway, I enjoyed the experience immensely. More important, I understand general reaction to the programme was excellent - and I was particularly pleased that a promotional "trailer" for my programme was broadcast between 30 and 40 times before it actually took place. They used the strains of GALWAY BAY for this purpose - and happily too, the ICC was mentioned over the air several times and my association with it.

> I am to do a programme on Christmas Eve, 11pm to midnight in which I intend to feature Bing heavily. As a matter of fact, I hope to be able to do a regular weekly programme during which I will be playing requests from listeners for nostalgic material, and this too will contain as Much of Mr. C. as I dare!

Looking back over this, I see I have omitted STARDUST from the songs I played....

Editor: Bing in Ireland has, rightly so, been dealt with at some length because only now has the omission been made good. Noel Mould not only had some memorable and unique experiences meeting Bing, talking with him, seeing him rehearse, the show itself - and he deserves the warmest congratulations on what was obviously a monumental broadcast put together with tremendous care and diligence, but he has reported it all in a nice, unassuming style. Clearly he did a great job in commorating Bing's "first 50 years"!

Understandably, Bing has a special affection for Ireland; after all, its the land of his ancestors....

I am wondering why Noel used I'VE GOT TO SING A TORCH SONG as his main theme? It must be his special favourite, I suppose. Not a bad choice, either! I did see a press report from an Irish paper about Noel (kindly sent by another Irish reader) and he certainly conducted a tremendous campaign for Bing in the ould country.... Well done.

LETTER OF INTEREST: In my opinion, the worst track on the album AT MY TIME OF LIFE is "How Are Things in Glocca Morra" - I fail to share the enthusiasm which has been drummed up by certain members regarding this number. Conversely, criticism has been made of the lyrics to "I'll Never Fall in Love Again" whilst other numbers have been dismissed as being 'showcases' for Pete Moore's orchestra. Again, I disagree with both these points.

Despite our mutual admiration for Bing as a person, there will always be opposing views when it comes to analysing the merits of each of his recordings. This is to be expected, of course, but I was once reprimanded for making statements which implied 'this is right," 'this is wrong', without prefixing my remarks with "In my opinion...." Perhaps one or two of the ICC'S columnists might take heed!

JOHN BASSETT (Essex)

Editor: Reckon they might, too! John is so right - it takes all-sorts. Ooo-er, all-sorts, Bassetts....Another pure accident. Hands up those who like GLOCCA MORRA!

KABLE CLUB

with

BERT BISHOP

When we went to press with the last (September) issue of BING it seemed clear that in the run-up to Christmas a whole shoal of Crosby recordings would become available.

As we go to press now it is disappointing that these issues have been, on the whole, slow in appearing. EMI were the only ones really off the mark at the right time - and with a splendid issue: CHRISTMAS IS A'COMING of which more below. The Palladium "live" albums, apparently the subject of some argument as to whether it should be one or two albums, were unbelievably delayed. One can only hope, not too disastrously delayed. It was certainly Ken Barnes's intention to "strike while the iron was hot" - to follow the live performances as quickly as possible with the "live" albums. We, of course, cannot get them quickly enough; but what of those other thousands who were at the Palladium, the Usher Hall, and the Gaiety Theatre? It seems not unlikely that, K-Tel advertising notwithstanding, the full potential of these albums, in a sales sense, may have been lost.

However that may be, Decca followed, around 19 November, with their contribution to the Crosby resurgence, renewing their historic association with Mr. Crosby, with the "London recorded" album FEELS GOOD under the executive direction of our old friend, Geoff. Milne. And it is with this excellent issue that Bert embarks on his tour de force of the current Crosby record scene.

"Christmas comes but once a year" runs the old adage ....but does it? It seems to me the older one gets the more rapid the arrival of the festive season - almost suggesting it has become a bi-annual event. However, the jingle continues: 'And when it comes it brings good cheer'; a phrase which conjures up visions of good entertainment, food and drink; but we can also make it grammatically verbal by our cheer for the excellent albums available to us for our Yuletide gatherings here in the United Kingdom. Our more distant members must, perforce, contain their patience for some time yet unless they number among those who will be receiving swift-flown packages from the UK via friends, in or out of the Circle. So, if you ARE a UK member do your very best in the spirit of Christmas to despatch at least one record to an overseas friend...whether by gift, sale, trade or exchange. Within the ICC that's the very least we can do.

As this momentous year draws to a close we can look back over historic events, ponder the prospects for the future and savour the events of the moment; and here I cannot resist saying it "feels good" to be doing just that with regard to the new releases. Let's bubble over with enthusiasm for the cheer of our good entertainment....my goodness, we've had to wait long enough for some of it.

BING,'FEELS GOOD, FEELS RIGHT' UK Decca SKL 5261 Stereo LP RRP £3.29p Cassette 5261 -

Feels Good, Feels Right.	(22 July)	There's Nothing that I haven't Sung About	(22 July)
Once in a While.	(21 July)	The Night is Young) and You're So Beautiful.	(21 July)
As Time Goes By.	(20 July)	Nevertheless.	(20 July)
Old-Fashioned Love.	(22 July)	The Rose in her Hair.	(21 July)
Time on my Hands.	(21 July)	What's New?	(17 Aug)
The Way We Were.	(20 July)	When I Leave the World Behind.	(20 July)

Not having received the advance publicity that most of Bing's new albums have had this last year or so we have, in this Decca presentation, a superb surprise bonus that keeps us reeling in amazement at the resurgence of our new, top-form, Bing. Yes, let's not lose sight of the fact that Bing <u>is</u> singing better than he was, and

and this LP is as good an example as any to prove the point.

Basically a collection of love ballads, there is at the same time a nice balance of pace as well as featuring appropriate 'openers' for each side. It appears that the up-tempo tunes were recorded at the third of the four sessions and the introductory number, first sung by Bing on a TV programme in the autumn of that anxious 1974, is easily the best example of three of them. It gets the album off to a flying start with Bing infectiously enthused by a lyric which tells us that as far as he is concerned it is great to be alive and well, and back singing in with a band. Band? Let me not do an injustice to this very fine orchestra conducted by Alan Cohen, who also contrived the arrangements. No line-up is to hand but there is aural evidence of a full string, brass and woodwind complement, including harp and harmonica. The arrangements are mostly traditional without losing sight of the contemporary big band sound and there's no doubt that the modern recording techniques do full justice to every member of the orchestra.

> For me, the best session occurred on 21 July when four very fine ballads were recorded. At one time the verse to a song was almost always featured, then for a time they became the exception rather than the rule. In several recent recordings Bing has given us verses which must be quite new to many listeners and, happily, that's a prominent feature of the presentation of the ballad sto which Bing brings his unique vocal nuances on this LP.

For example, the lyricist's intention for ONCE IN A WHILE takes on a new dimension as Bing sings the introduction to this lovely, wistful, ballad in a very straight delivery which gains rather than loses by it.

TIME ON MY HANDS features a very sympathetic arrangement to a more Bing-like rendition...those 'bent' notes that sound Oh, so right when Bing is handling them in this expert fashion. The harpist is effectively prominent, blending in with the undulating rhythmic melody and providing an infinitive fade-out to a fine vocal.

The romantic title and lyric of THE NIGHT IS YOUNG AND YOU'RE SO BEAUTIFUL call for a lush arrangement; hence the string section is well to the fore, echoing the night breeze of which Bing sings in this slightly more rangy ballad. But there are no strained notes from our crooner par excellence. I deliberately use the word 'crooner' despite the fact that in some quarters the term has slipped into disrepute - which is a pity. To sing softly (by comparison with some methods of vocal delivery) and with feeling is Bing's metier....it brought him fame.

Of the four ballads for that session in the first three - ONCE IN A WHILE especially - are extant performances: an object lesson in how to sing a love ballad without the need for 'clever' interpretations. The fourth song, THE ROSE IN HER HAIR, first recorded by Bing with Billy May in 1960 (EL SENOR BING and LATIN STYLE albums), gains an added verse only by this further recording...perhaps a more interesting arrangement as well, for there is a harmonica solo to echo Bing's first chorus. I say that because, to me, Bing's warbled modulations, though inherent in the melody, sound unnaturally false in this new version. This is particularly noticeable on the last word of the line "just put her there," which smacks slightly of vocal histrionics which I'm sure Bing could have avoided in another 'take'. As always, a personal opinion; but I refuse to enthuse without freedom to question or criticise...however uninformed I may be!

The 20 July session is notable for two Bing performances reminiscent of the Philco Radio Time genre; namely, AS TIME GOES BY and NEVERTHELESS. Both are sung in that easy going, almost throwaway style that Bing brought to his famous radio series. Plenty of ad lib interjection accompanied, one feels, by the famous foot-tapping, facial expressions that are part of the breezy Bing legend. Not so casual as to be worthless for any band singer of the day would have given his eye teeth to have come across as effectively as Bing did then - and does now. Even the accompaniments lend themselves to this Crosby treatment; the NEVERTHELESS number having a distinct Benny Goodman style about it.

Of the other couple of tracks recorded on that date, THE WAY WE WERE is a fairly

modern song - and it shows. I can't decide whether most modern songs are too ethereal or too realistic; whichever it is this one won't ever be a standard, I'm sure. Both the vocal and the accompaniment are tasteful and well performed - but its a forgettable song, and might well have been supplanted by TIME AFTER TIME to have made up a trio on the same theme.

The final track for this Tuesday date serves beautifully as a closure for the complete album, being Irving Berlin's 1915 composition WHEN I LEAVE THE WORLD BEHIND. Schmaltzy it may be to some; but personally I think it is a lovely sentimental song. Without wishing to detract from Al Jolson's version (he introduced it, in his own very special way) surely Bing admirers will have no qualms about saying that this 1976 version is the best they have ever heard.

Nearly a month was to elapse before the final recording for the album was made, which may mean that an earlier recording was found to be unsatisfactory - but that is pure supposition on my part. Anyway, the last date gives us WHAT'S NEW?, the only other song that Bing had already made a commercial recording of - in 1939, with John Scott Trotter. Never a favourite of mine, it still isn't, mainly on account of Bing's American pronunciation of the adjective from the title..."Noo"! No offence to our American friends - and members - of course, but on ethnic grounds it does detract from the pensively romantic intimacy of the lyric to these British ears. Apart from which the entire recording is rather 'dead' with Bing leaving us in mid-air with an inconclusive finish that just begs a more positive repeat last line.

Although the session for OLD FASHIONED-LOVE has been referred to, this title has not been specifically reviewed. As already implied, it is a pacey track with good rhythm and style, being the closest to the John Scott Trotter sound on the album. Whilst not suggesting that John Scott's arrangements have proved to be an unassailable pinnacle, nor even necessarily to be emulated, the connection with Bing is so nostalgically tenable that one cannot dismiss comparison lightly. This is a Bing song all the way and his delivery belies his years more than any other track on the album, not forgetting that it was all recorded shortly after the rigours of the Palladium fortnight.

Deliberately left until last is the 'opener' for Side 2, THERE'S NOTHING THAT I HAVEN'T SUNG ABOUT. Little could be truer than the title of this composition based on Bing's recording career. A song which he first performed in the Arte Johnson Show, screened on TV in 1971, and in Britain on BBC-2 on 22 July of that year and more apposite now than five years ago; excepting that Bing still hasn't found it necessary to take a swing at 'acid rock' thank heavens...though the song, as performed, is in a country-rock style. Bing is in tremendous form, full of verve and punch, putting expression into what might have otherwise been a trite string of song titles held together with a tenuous lyric that only he could sustain. "I've always been a vocal gadabout, " sings Bing; with full scale concerts in London, Scotland, Ireland Broadway - and Germany, possibly Australia immiment - in six months, to say nothing of visits to other countries betwixt and between (I mean, we've read that he sang to half a dozen people amid the horror of the Mexican hurricane!), it is clear that Bing intends to maintain that troubadour status. Let's hope he continues to stop off at recording studios to make more albums of this calibre - though it will be hard to beat.

The sleeve has a full-colour photograph of Bing smiling full into the camera. His country gear looks good and, I'm sure, feels right, too... 'Recorded in London' is emblazoned in red above the UK Decca sign - proudly, of course! Turn the sleeve over and there are ~~revealed~~ fourteen black and white photographs taken whilst recording; ten of them being candid shots of Bing engrossed and/or enjoying himself surrounded by musicians and technicians. Full credits are given - being Producer Kevin Daly; Executive producer Geoff. Milne, Recording Chief Technicians Martin Smith (July) and Arthur Lilley (August), with orchestra and arrangements by Alan Cohen, to all of whom we should be very grateful for supporting and presenting Bing so expertly.

Editor: Surely Bert has the hall-mark of the first-class reviewer, by which I mean you can thoroughly enjoy his analytical reviews without necessarily agreeing with them! Just as well John Bassett delivered his tart little homily at the bottom of page 29. While largely agreeing with Bert's assessment, I was a little pained that he "panned" two of my highlights! From this lovely album master-minded by Geoff Milne - and its so true it was kept virtually a secret. I'm glad and sorry about that...glad because we have had a truly delightful surprise in this issue; sorry that our good friends at Decca didn't see fit to let us have a glimmer of what Bing was doing with his old "original" recording firm....

However, to the "highlights" - no-one is a bigger critic of most modern songs than your indiscreet Editor. But I've always found exceptions, and I think THE WAY WE WERE is such a case. I first heard this song when I accompanied Roy Chappell on one of his big-club engagements. I was so struck by it I asked Roy about it afterwards. "Oh, its been a big hit for .....(I forget who now) for some time," said Roy. I was bowled over with it when Bing did it at the Palladium - it will be on that album, too, for the Decca sleeve acknowledges an arrangement with UA to present the song on FEELS GOOD.

> I feel this song is in the ONCE IN A WHILE mould as regards sentiment. Wistful (as Bert suggested ONCE IN A WHILE is) and poignant can, I feel, be applied to THE WAY WE WERE. No, I must agree its unlikely to become a "standard" as Bert says - pity, I think it a lovely song.

And WHAT'S NOO? I must confess this pronunciation does make one cringe a little - unless one remembers that Bing has been an American for quite a while now! Another insistent number which has always been a favourite of mine! Oh dear....

I hate to confess it, but I just have no knowledge of Alan Cohen until this album. But clearly a musician and arranger of the highest order: his coda to WHEN I LEAVE THE WORLD BEHIND - never mind the lyric! - is one of the loveliest things I've heard in a long while. One of my favourites is OLD-FASHIONED LOVE - lovely number..... it will be most interesting to read the mail produced by this issue. I must confess whenever I hear Bing singing a pop-number, or even a near-pop number, I get the feeling it can be compared with a Rolls Royce taking part in stock-car racing. Now, to note - this is the end of your Editor's interpolation - FEELS GOOD surely justifies it? - and now it's back to BERT'S SHOP to continue keeping track:

CHRISTMAS IS A'COMING - WITH BING CROSBY: UK Stereo, Music for Pleasure MFP 50314 RRP £1.25p.

That Christmas Feeling.
Christmas is A'Coming (May God Bless You).
The Christmas Song. (Merry Christmas to You)
Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer.
Is Christmas Only a Tree?
You're All I Want for Christmas.
Here Comes Santa Claus (Right Down Santa Claus Lane).
Christmas Carols: Deck the Hall.
Away in a Manger.
I Saw Three Ships.
The First Noel.
Twelve Days of Christmas.
O Fir Tree Dark.
Christmas Carols: Good King Wenceslas.
We Three Kings of Orient Are.
Angels We Have Heard on High.
I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day.

Making a welcome appearance - and in good time, too - for the Christmas market is this MFP issue of the US Decca DL8781 THAT CHRISTMAS FEELING; an LP never before released in the UK - only Australia had an equivalent. So in that respect it is a very good buy indeed for UK members, especially as there are one or two tracks that have not been available for some years.

The simulated stereo effect is not to everyone's choice; personally I find it acceptable on this album as the echo is not overdone. However, there have been several reports of flaws in the pressings; but most reputable retailers check them out. The Christmas material featured is well varied: holy songs and carols, childrens' songs;

two tracks with the Andrews Sisters and a couple with Buddy Cole. Even at full price it would have been an acceptable Yuletide offering; at the budget label price it's an absolute bargain. Two or three spare copies on your shelves must be worth more than money in the bank!

One quarrel; and that's with the sleeve. It would seem that MFP have only one picture of Bing - an undistinguished shot of him taken some time in the late 60's I would guess. A painting from it was used for their release of the Bregman titles on the BING CROSBY MFP 1240, one that I vote as being the ugliest Bing LP sleeve ever produced. Whilst the original photo featured on their latest release is an improvement it has been suggested that somebody send them a better photograph for use on any future releases. In all other respects the sleeve is adequate. Basically red with snow-capped title, and individual tracks well detailed. The Andrews Sisters are briefly mentioned. (Editor's note to those who already have written that they consider this MFP sleeve/picture to be one of the best issued - don't be dismayed! You pays yer money.....)

STRINGING THE BLUES: THE GOLDEN DAYS OF JAZZ: EDDIE LANG AND JOE VENUTI - Dutch CBS 88142 (2-LP Set - 80898/80899)

80899 is the individual record number of Volume Two, and features Bing singing the 1932 track SOME OF THESE DAYS. The album is a direct equivalent of the UK CBS BPG 62144.

THE VERY BEST OF BING — UK World Records. P.29 (6-LP set) £14.95 (£13.95 to bona fide ICC members - see BING No.39 Sept. 1975 for details)

It is as well to note that this fine collection is being re-advertised on a new basis by way of a record and brochure, covering 18 different artistes' collection called PICK-A-BACK Lyntone LYN3479 which features 45 seconds of the 1947 WHITE CHRISTMAS. To acquire this 'collectors' item write to World Records, PO Box 11, Richmond, Surrey requesting the Pick-a-Pack brochure.

STARS OF THE SILVER SCREEN (MCA) 80PS 7683/1-2 Swedish 2-LP Set. £4.50

This album has been seen in UK record shops and has been noted as featuring two Bing titles, namely ROAD TO MOROCCO with Bob Hope and YOU BELONG TO MY HEART.

ITS EASY TO REMEMBER MCA MAPS 8206 New Zealand (TU 1005 Australian) 5.50 dollars.

White Christmas
When Irish Eyes are Smiling.
Galway Bay.
I'll Take You Home Again, Kathleen.
Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral.
Pennies from Heaven.
Never on Sunday.
In the Cool, Cool, Cool of the Evening.
You Must Have been a Beautiful Baby.
Sam's Song.
Sunshine Cake.
Temptation (with Buddy Cole)
McNamara's Band
Mexicali Rose.
I'm An Old Cowhand.
Don't Fence me In.
Tumbling Tumbleweeds.(with Buddy Cole)
There's A Goldmine in the Sky " ")
Begin the Beguine.
Gone Fishin'
Now is the Hour.

The sleeve features a three-quarter profile photo of Bing in serious mood, but quite an attractive presentation. The album was noted in the last issue of BING with a request for details of contents - hence my thanks to the two members who wrote in response to that request.

There will be further record news we hope before this issue is finished, especially as the new single WHEN A CHILD IS BORN has already been broadcast with a comment from, I understand, Terry Wogan, that this version is superior to that of Johnny Mathis.... Leslie Gaylor's column will contain full details from Ken Barnes re latest recording activities - projected rather than actually issued; Bert has dealt with these.

OFFERED AT CHRISTIE'S.....

In this year of so many "firsts" - the latest being its the first time we've seen a Crosby album being advertised on television - we were a little surprised to receive a copy of their catalogue from Christie's, the world famous auctioneers of St. James, London, announcing the auction of:

(Lot) 281 CROSBY (Harry Lillis, 'Bing'): Series of Two A.Ls.S., Twenty-three T.Ls.S. and One A.Pc.S., Paris, Versailles, Hollywood, Pebble Beach, New York, Palm Beach, Hayden Lake, San Francisco, Rising River, and Hillsborough, 2 October 1954 to 13 December 1965, to Charles Graves, author and journalist, a lively, personal correspondence covering over ten years of Bing's life, his work and interests, on subjects ranging from golf to 'High Society', with amusing comments on their mutual friend Bob Hope, interspersed with opinions on scripts and scriptwriters, television and its effect on pictures, and Bing's own television shows, approx. 40;; 4to 2pp., 8vo (one TLS incomplete) and another by Mrs. Kathryn Crosby.

"On January 23, 1956, Bing writes that he is about to embark on HIGH SOCIETY, 'I am starting a picture with Grace Kelly this week; in fact, they've been going three or four days already. Also in the cast are Frank Sinatra, Louis Armstrong and his band, and some other stalwarts, so we have high hopes of this one...' adding 'She (Grace Kelly) sure knocked everybody off the applecart by her engagement last month. I had seen her just before she went to New York and the gave no intimation then that she was bound for a life-long romantic entanglement...she's a fine girl, and deserves happiness and contentment'. While in one of many affectionately comical references to Bob Hope he writes, 'I agree with you that Hope is very courageous indeed to attempt a picture with Fernandel. I am sure that with all the grimacing and mugging these two comics are indulging in, their faces will be stretched out of all semblance to their former contours. Still, you can't tell, Hope may look better that way....'

6 May 1957.

The above is taken exactly as it appeared in Christie's catalogue, which we gladly acknowledge. The initials in the announcement refer to Typed Letters Signed, Autographed Letters, etc. etc. indicating of course that some of the correspondence was handwritten and some of it typed but signed by Bing. The auction duly took place on 13 October last at 10.30am. Differing reports on what this item fetched so we'll not go into it. But it did seem a surprising sale - not least because thousands of people all over the world, and certainly in Britain, possess signed letters, even hand-written letters, from Bing. Perhaps dear old Leslie Gaylor is beginning to wonder what HIS collection of Crosby-correspondence may be worth! Though we're certain Leslie has not the slightest intention of disposing of it - ever. But his correspondence, indicating a very warm regard and friendship, must be very considerable by now; and likely to get even more so.

A whole new series of correspondence has been touched off by Bing's long and busy visit to Britain in this year of 1976. James Dineen, of Glasgow, is not only a tremendous Bing man, he is also a very, very keen photographer. James handed Bing ten large pictures (10 x 8) at Edinburgh Airport taken at Gleneagles of Bing himself, Harry and Nathaniel; he was also able to give to Bing the picture that Harry took in Scotland last year, using his Dad's camera. Anyway, James's efforts produced a hand-written letter from Bing:

Gleneagles Hotel.

Dear James,

Thanks for the pictures you gave me at the Edinburgh Airport. They are very good and Harry will like them, I am sure. I am not sure what you wanted done with the enclosed picture, but I imagine you wanted it autographed - Regards, Bing.

But to illustrate Bing's interest, that wasn't enough - he sent a typewritten

though signed, letter from his Stateside home:

Sept. 27.

Dear Jim,

I just wanted to be sure that you were properly thanked for the pictures you sent me. I thought they were very fine indeed. I saw the letter you wrote Mrs. Crosby and I fear maybe the letter I wrote you when I was in London, hadn't reached you, so I'm taking this means of furnishing the proper thanks.

All of us appreciate our association with you, and seeing you every year when we are there, and look forward to seeing you when we come back next summer.

Hope you liked "The Heiress". I thought it was a good play, and it is probably the best thing Mrs. Crosby has ever done. A very successful thing for her, and I believe she'll probably do it over here.

Hope that you have a good winter - not too much bad weather - although I know you need the rain, but not as badly as they need it in Southern England, perhaps, but you do need a little bit.

All the best to you and your family. BING.

We specially underlined that phrase so full of promise! But note how Bing never fails to think of special difficulties that may be besetting us.... and that wasn't all Jim Dineen's reaped either, for he received the following letter from Mrs. Crosby:

Dear James,

You were so dear to send the pictures to us. We feel that they're the best ones taken of me the whole summer. I loved me in my fun hat. And Harry looked super also. Rosie Clooney was not too thrilled but that's what she gets for having her hair rolled up when she goes to the Palladium.

I've put your letter on Bing's desk because I think it expresses more beautifully than anyone else the effect Bing does have on people. How dear you were to come to see him all those times, and to report about the girl who wanted him to sing 'Please'. Bing seems to affect a lot of people that way. I'm one of them!

It was so sweet of you to come and see 'The Heiress'. It was a splendid theatrical experience for us. To overcome some kinds of adversity is a good thing, and your support made the adventure a truly exciting one.

Best wishes, Kathryn Crosby.

Seems Jim was ungallant enough to photograph Rosie Clooney in her curlers! A most disquieting experience for any lady.....but James's efforts certainly produced some warming and very individual replies.

Another good friend and member, BILL WARLEY (shortly to retire from the University of Hull 'Brynmor Jones Library' and we wish him extra well on that account) also had a fine letter from Mrs. Crosby - which needs no further explanation:

Dear Mr. Warley,

Our whole family loves England, and we therefore appreciate so much the beautiful gift of Yorkshire folk art. They are lovely, and certainly this kind of work is almost a lost art today, so they become doubly precious.

We are so happy that you enjoyed our show, and that you liked our Christmas show with Fred Astaire. We had a lot of fun doing it.

Thank you for writing, and thank you again for the lovely gift.

Sincerely, Kathryn Crosby.

Bill did NOT tell us what the Yorkshire folk art was. We'd like to know.....

Mrs. Betty Lonnhuist a "near-neighbour" of your Editor in Penarth, S. Glamorgan, was particularly delighted to receive, recently, a signed letter from Bing. Betty wrote:

I thought you might like to know, just as a matter of interest, that I've just received a signed letter from Bing, and I was so pleased I'd thought I'd let you know. When Bing was at the Palladium last summer, for various reasons, I wasn't able to get there but I wrote to him to wish him luck and explain how sorry I wasn't able to attend. I don't really know why; but it was something I felt I had to do. I certainly didn't expect a reply, especially one from America, after his extensive tour. So it just proved to me (not that any proof was needed, of course) that Bing really is the sincere person I've always thought him to be. To take the trouble to send a 'thank you' to me - from America; and I wrote to the Palladium!

Indeed, remarkable evidence of that sincerity.

A more "historic" letter has come to hand too, from Norman Jones (friend of Ken Barnes in National Service days!) Norman lives in Port Talbot, also in Wales, of course. Norman has let us have this letter dated August 20, 1946 and it has an interest all its own:

Dear Master Jones,

Due to material shortages, I'm not going to be able to send out any more photos until we can obtain envelopes, cardboard, etc and I'm saving what we have to take care of the requests of the boys and girls in the different services. Our latest picture release is ROAD TO UTOPIA in which I hit the trail again with Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour.

With best wishes, I am,
Sincerely, BING.

A year later, August 20, 1947 precisely, Norman had this:

Dear Mr. Jones,

The photo you requested is being forwarded under separate cover. My next picture release will be WELCOME STRANGER, with Barry Fitzgerald and Joan Caulfield. You'll be hearing the songs, which are COUNTRY STYLE, MY HEART IS A HOBO, SMILE RIGHT BACK AT THE SUN and AS LONG AS I'M DREAMING.

Thanks for your interest, and with best wishes, I am, Sincerely,
BING CROSBY.

We imagine it would be as difficult to calculate, or even estimate, the number of letters Bing has written in his 50 years as it would be to calculate the number of records he has really sold....in each case the figure must be astronomical. Very few letters go unanswered - and those that are not probably go astray. A third interesting calculation would be - what has been the cost of mail over those years? Mind-boggling, no doubt.

LES GAYLOR'S GREETING

There are no professionals on the ICC; all the officers listed on the inside front cover, including your Editor, do a normal full-time job, and consider Crosbyana as a worthwhile pursuit and a delightful hobby. And speaking as one whose normal activities make a one-armed paper-hanger look comparatively inactive, I still stand amazed at what the indefatigable Leslie Gaylor gets thro'. The letters he writes would, I am certain, keep two full-time secretaries fully engaged - no letter from Les has any frills, either. All sound facts and news. And he does them all in long-hand! No typewriting - says he can't use one and it would be too slow.... Editor.

Christmas almost with us once again - the traditional Crosby time - and its tempting to keep harping back on the wonderful year that is now closing. In fact, two years for 1975 also was a tremendous year for Bing admirers. Everyone is utterly delighted that Bing is back in action in such a big way. Even more are they delighted that he exhibits such a tremendous will to work.

Happily, we in Britain have had the cream, the full benefit, of Bing's renewed activities for it is here that he has recorded, here that he has made so many public appearances. My mind goes back even further. To 1972 when the first Parkinson TV show took place. That seems to have triggered off so much though one cannot ignore the fact that Bing took on a new zest for life after his serious operation two years back. That the Palladium shows - not forgetting those in Scotland and Ireland - dominate virtually everything else goes without saying. Thousands of people, from what I gather, are still: Did it really happen? It did - and all those lovely encounters on the golf-courses and so on. Still, there's plenty of new action to stop me dwelling unduly on what HAS happened.

I feel the best way of presenting my latest news is to let you read the letters recently received from KEN BARNES, whose permission I have to let you do so:

Nov. 5 - Beverly Hills Hotel,
California.

Dear Leslie,

Just completed the new Crosby album and I think you're going to be excited when you hear the results. Most of the material is of an overtly contemporary nature - indeed, some of the songs are among the most unusual, not to say adventurous, songs that Bing has recorded.

Recording dates and titles are as follows:

October 19: WHEN A CHILD IS BORN, WHAT I DID FOR LOVE, THE MORE I SEE YOU (the first two titles are to be issued very shortly as Bing's next UA single).

October 29: DEJA VU, MY RESISTANCE IS LOW, A LITTLE LOVE AND UNDERSTANDING, THE WOMAN ON YOUR ARM.

November 5: SEASONS, COME SHARE THE WINE, BEAUTIFUL MEMORIES.

You will note that only eleven titles were recorded. This is because Bing expressed some trepidation about the message contained in the lyric of MAKE LIKE A STAR. By the time I was able to supply a fresh lyric - which gave the song a different meaning from the original concept - it was too late for Bing to learn it in time for the session. But he says he will record it next year.

As you know, we do have some extra titles from previous sessions so the album will not be short-weight!

On Monday October 23 Bing made the TV commercial in San Francisco which will be used in connection with the Palladium 2-record pack on K-Tel. News has just

reached me that K-Tel are also picking the album up for a similar campaign in the USA.

As you may know, Bing is doing another concert in Las Vegas on November 26. He will be using the song FEELS GOOD in his act, but with a new arrangement. Apart from this the act will be basically the same as the Palladium.

And on Ken's return from the States: November 17

Dear Leslie,

I've just got back from the States so its taken me some time to gather some of the information you asked for....The most immediate issue is the new single WHEN A CHILD IS BORN. This will be released on Nov. 26, and the "B" side will be WHAT I DID FOR LOVE - a big ballad from the musical A CHORUS LINE). The Mathis version of CHILD is already in the charts so we may have already lost the race on this song. If only Bing had recorded it when he was in London. I knew it was a hit song the moment I heard it. However, we are still going to try and see if we can pass the Mathis disc. Producer of the Wogan show said he thought Bing's version superior to the Mathis and he has programmed it for next Wednesday morning (it was duly heard - Ed.) A lot of people are of the opinion that the song suits Bing's family image - a quality that other singers may lack. But as I said, Mathis has got a big start on this song, so its not going to be easy to get Bing away at this late date - but we'll try for sure.

Your name - and Reg Bristo's - will be on the Palladium sleeve, and the TV advertising will certainly help the single by making people Crosby-conscious.

Its a toss-up between YOURS SINCERELY and COME SHARE THE WINE as to which winds up on the next album. I don't as yet have any mix-downs of any of the tracks - the master-tapes have not yet arrived from the States. When they do get here, it occurred to me that maybe you would like to come over to London when I am doing the reductions. It would give you a chance to see what goes on behind the scenes.

Pete Moore did NOT go with me to the States, but he did write all the arrangements on the new album. Bing's vocals were recorded at Devonshire Studios of Magnolia Boulevard, North Hollywood. I don't know how you ever found out about WHITE CHRISTMAS - but its true that Bing did record half a chorus only of this song with Paul Smith on piano. It was intended for inclusion on the Palladium set - but in the end MCA refused permission so it will not be used. Bing recorded this at Devonshire Studios on the October 19 session. WE'VE ONLY JUST BEGUN was recorded at the second session on October 28.

Bing's next UA album - which is tentatively set for February release - is as yet untitled. But if we get a hit it will probably be called WHEN A CHILD IS BORN.

The contents - not in running order - will possibly read as follows:

WHEN A CHILD IS BORN: A LITTLE LOVE & UNDERSTANDING: WE'VE ONLY JUST BEGUN: MY RESISTANCE IS LOW, WHAT I DID FOR LOVE: THE WOMAN ON YOUR ARM: DEJA VU: BEAUTIFUL MEMORIES: THE MORE I SEE YOU: CHILDREN: THE ONLY WAY TO GO and COME SHARE THE WINE or YOURS SINCERELY. SEASONS, at the moment, is being shelved for inclusion on a later album based on the four seasons along with SPRING WILL BE A LITTLE LATE THIS YEAR.

Once again, I can only report that Bing was a real pleasure to work with; he made a charming impression on everyone at the studio. He was also in terrific voice - as you'll discover when you hear his single of CHILD. Best wishes....Ken.

There it is: straight from the horse's mouth; Ken went to all this trouble to answer specific enquiries I had put to him. What a debt we owe to him in so many

ways? And for me, among the great pleasures of the past year, was the delight of being able to meet so many members of the ICC I hadn't met before. And speaking of the members, I have been asked continually recently when the BINGO VIEJO album is going to appear. Frankly, I haven't a clue; Decca are perhaps keeping it up their sleeve with all the Bing material appearing just now.

Alan Warner of United Artists, so closely associated with the UA albums, along with Ken Barnes, is now working for the company in Los Angeles. This should certainly be good for the American scene for Alan told me before he left that it was his intention to record Bing just as much as he could - "and you can quote me on that" were his final words. Its useless to wish you could turn back the clock but one cannot help reflecting on what it would have been like if Bing had been recording in the late 50's, thro' the 60's and the earlier 70's the way he has been this last couple of years - and under that direction and management?

Something I meant to mention in earlier issues but somehow did not - when Ken edited the tapes of THAT'S WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT he did no less than 30 "mixes"! Before he was satisfied, that is....at this juncture, too, I would like to say I have no idea of why there is a lesser recording quality and tonal sound on the recording SOME SUNNY DAY on the THAT'S WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT album. It was done in the same studios with the same people so it should have sounded precisely as all the others. I'll have to ask Ken - especially as its been pointed out there is the same effect on LOOKING AT YOU on the AT MY TIME OF LIFE album. I imagine this developes in the mixing stage.

Another technical point: numerous collectors were more than pleased with the marvellous presentation of Bing's voice on the CHILIREN track; it really is superb. There was considerably less enthusiasm, I found, for the reverse side which was not presented with the same recording quality. It was considered that on the "A" side, AT MY TIME OF LIFE, prominence in the mixing was given to the orchestra and the arrangement, with Bing's voice being "cut down". So, when in London a few weeks after its (the singles) release I asked Alan Warner if it was possible for this number to be re-mixed before its release on the album of the same name? To my amazement, Alan seemed co-operative and simply said: "See Ken Barnes." A few hours later I had the good fortune to meet Ken - always a pleasure. I put my point and Ken listened intently. "I mixed that track the same as is done on Perry Como's recordings - and he always enjoys great sales", was his comment. Ken was at Decca on other mixings - not Bing - at the time and said if he could manage a remix he would, but the master disc for the album had to be made very shortly and there possibly would not be time. "How much will it cost?" I asked Ken. "Oh, about £100," he replied, casually....

It turned out that time was against Ken but he did manage to roll off some of the bass on the track which, said Ken, should automatically shoot the voice forward a little more. I think there is a slight difference detectable between the single and the album versions. At least, I think I can...

Since starting these notes for the Christmas issue, I've got the Decca FEELS GOOD issue; and what a cracker it is! This gives me great joy, especially the tracks AS TIME GOES BY, THE WAY WE WERE, and THE NIGHT IS YOUNG. What tremendous recording quality there is here - the deep "Bing" sound is back here, for certain. And Alan Cohen's orchestra and arrangements are beautiful and balanced with Bing in superb fashion. Perhaps this album presents the Bing that some of the more nostalgic members are always hankering for? Or so letters tell me. No one is going to allege, I am sure, that Bing has been "sabotaged" and made runner-up to the orchestra!

True, that old bogey creeps in on the three up-tempo numbers - that's where the Bing voice gets thinner. I'm inclined to agree with Editor Reg over Bing and up-tempo pop numbers about the Rolls Royce and stock car racing! While rejoicing over this issue, I am sorry that THAT OLD BLACK MAGIC was not used as originally planned. I hear it was Bing's request that it been taken off

Concluding, thank you all for your wonderful letters and support..and a big thank you to Bing. I hope you have a very happy Christmas and another wonderful Bing year in 1977!

ABOVE: REG BRISTO AND BOB ROBERTS WITH BING IN BOND STREET...

LEFT: "HMMM...THAT SHOT'LL TAKE SOME BEATING....

(BING AT ST. ANDREWS, 1976)

READERS' LETTERS

A popular feature somewhat neglected in the past year because of pressure on space occasioned by the exciting events taking place. Members are cordially invited to express their views, especially if they disagree with what they read in BING. Postage, alas, is a very heavy burden and while we hate to sound Scrooge-like at this particular time of the year, it would be appreciated if, when an answer is required, writers would enclose a stamp or SAE. And this applies when writing to the various personages mentioned inside front cover on questions of discography, taping, and general information.

"LETTERS TO THE EDITOR" intended for this feature should be addressed to REG BRISTO, 7, Greenmeadow Close, CWMBRAN, GWENT, NP4 3NR.

DAVID PLUMBLEY, 38 Stanley St., Tunstall, Stoke-on-Trent: Being also a member of the Glenn Miller Society it has been interesting to me to see how much Glenn and Bing's paths crossed during the 30's and 40's, and if you have the Biograph LP of Bing's early recordings you will see what a nice tribute Bing pays to Glenn in the last paragraph of Bing's sleeve note. For years I have searched for the recordings that Bing made with Glenn's magnificent AEF Orchestra in 1944, but according to the experts these are gems that we shall never hear as it seems the records were destroyed.

A few months ago a friend of mine whose neighbour lives close to the M6 was out taking her dog for a walk early one Sunday morning when a car pulled up by her and she was asked for directions to the Post House (a 5-star motel). After she had given directions she was given a very pleasant "Thank you" - and "Good day to you." It was only after the car had driven off that, aware she knew the face well, she realised she had been talking to Bing and young Nathaniel. How lucky can you get?

JOHN FAHY, 27 Dukes Ave., Theydon Bois, Epping, Essex:

The new Decca album came as a surprise. Could you not persuade Geoff. Milne to feed some information thro' on this sort of thing? I'm sure it would be of mutual benefit.

A few issues back you, or someone, expressed puzzlement over the lyrics to THOU SWELL. The mixture of mediaeval English and modern American slang is, of course, simply because of the Yankee's transposition to Arthurian England - as in the film. The verse to the song sounds odd when taken out of context and Bing makes it sound odder by singing only part of it. Still, no complaints!

Editor: Agree: it becomes ungrammatical and grates on some ears, it seems. Still, like John, no complaints!

NEIL O'BRIEN, 4 Wychbury Street, Spreydon, Christchurch 2, New Zealand: Since joining the ICC some 18 months ago it seems that hardly a journal goes by without someone taking a 'snipe' at the BREGMAN SWINGS albums. Why? In my opinion this particular album contains the greatest selection of material that Bing has committed to LP. The tunesmiths represented here - Rogers & Hart, George Gershwin, Jerome Kern, Irving Berlin etc. are, or were, the best in the business and the selections generally speaking are of the highest calibre. In other words, the best from the best. Admittedly the Bregman arrangements are on the brash side but the tunes suit this type of treatment and Bing swings along happily. Let's face it, some tunes don't require lush string sections or "mickey mouse" reed sections as personfied by Guy Lombardo. As Bing jokingly said when referring to the Lombardo band: "Its amazing how long you can last with one good arrangement and clean unfiroms" or words to that effect. I for one always wished that Bing had spent more time in the recording studios with the big band type of aggregation as exemplified by Bregman and Basie. I am not the only one who holds the above views considering the number of times this set has been released...I'm the tape of A & R man who would have recorded Bing with the Ted Heath or the Johnny Dankworth bands....its a pity that Bing's collaborations with the Glenn Miller band never saw the light of day, or did they?

Editor: Well, we've already conceded it takes all-sorts- but your Editor, speaking from a purely personal angle, feels thankful that Neil was NOT Bing's A & R man....

Neil concedes my biggest criticism of this album: the arrangements are on the brash side! To coin an Americanism: he can say THAT again. But I can agree with Neil on the composers - definitely among the world's best ever. BUT, neither Neil or anyone else will convince me that when the composer was inspired to write that lovely song SEPTEMBER IN THE RAIN he ever conceived it to sound the way Bregman made it sound. Nothing wrong with the songs, they're lovely. Its the way they are treated. I don't like brashness in music - or anything else, for that matter.

And don't imagine I don't like jazz numbers, or Bing singing them! SOUTH RAMPART ST. PARADE, WALKING THE FLOOR OVER YOU, THAT'S A'PLENTY, and do ns of similar things are long, long favourites of mine. But, they are NOT brashly treated ballads. I don't like listening to music which makes me cringe - and the Bregman certainly has that effect. On me. I would like conclusive evidence, too, that Bing ever made that comment about Guy Lombardo - as we've pointed out before, Guy Lombardo is STILL leading his neatly turned out band after 50 years. And Neil's comment (reported) on the "one arrangement" doesn't carry much weight: Bregman's arrangements begin to sound the same - with the one big exception, they show no taste. I feel that bands which were out and out swing bands just did not need a singer - just someone to holler along with 'em.

I suppose it makes a difference to the listener if he/she remembers these numbers when they were first issued and the tuneful way they were treated. I crave the indulgence of readers for breaking the non-partisan role of the Editor. Most infra-dig!

Neil's full address went astray: it is, of course, NEW ZEALAND. And the strange-looking word is uniform! One final word: why pick on old Guy Lombardo anyway? Surely there's plenty in between he - and Bregman?

MEMBERS WHO WERE AGHAST AT THE RECENT LEGAL CASE OVER BING'S "EXTRA SPECIALE" ALBUM AND ITS (ACCORDING TO THE FIRM) WITHDRAWAL SHOULD NOT BE DISMAYED: ON A RECENT VISIT TO LONDON I SAW IT IN SEVERAL SHOPS, CERTAINLY MANY COPIES IN THE HARLEQUIN SHOP NEXT DOOR TO LITTLEWOODS!

STAN WILLCOX, 21 Littleway, Leicester, LE5 4PN: Almost 12 months have passed since I joined the ICC. I enjoy the magazine very much and would like to say a big "thank you" to you and all concerned with producing BING. As far as I am concerned 1976 has got to be THE YEAR - like so many members I fulfilled my greatest ambition and saw BING IN PERSON! What can be said that hasn't already been said about those great performances? A final thought: how is it that I, an admirer of Bing for over 40 years, only discovered the ICC last year?

Editor: Stan's letter is printed because it expresses accurately and briefly what literally hundreds of letters say. We don't usually print nice letters about BING because we like to use the space for other things - but in deference to ALL the contributors this exception is made. Thank you Stan and all who write in similar vein. Publicity is a big - and expensive - problem for the ICC; among all the great things Ken Barnes has done for Crosbyana, not the least is his kindness in printing the address of the ICC on the sleeves of his UA albums. This has brought so many real Crosby admirers into the fold; Stan Willcox is a typical example. Thanks again to Ken Barnes.

ADRIENNE DODDS, 24 York Str., Hasland, Chesterfield: I noticed in the magazine that you said you couldn't remember Bing having PLEASE as his signature tune. Roy and I can remember when we were kids during the War that Bing had a 15 or 30 minute radio show, probably something like BING SINGS on BBC, or perhaps just after the war on Radio Luxembourg when PLEASE WAS the signature tune...

Editor: Indeed, Adrienne is right - but many radio producers did use PLEASE as an intro for Bing aeons ago. But Bing never did and that was the point at issue. BLUE OF THE NIGHT was Bing's choice, and he mentions (I believe) that JUST AN ECHO was once considered as a "relief". I think PLEASE would have been an excellent theme

for Bing - it was possibly the first big hit he had - and the opening line is just right: Please, lend your little ear.....Still, nothing wrong with BLUE OF THE NIGHT; one of the most remember-able tunes ever written, I suppose. Everyone knows it.... Here again, many readers wrote that they remember PLEASE as a signature tune. We can only repeat, however, never by Bing.

BARRY ADAMS, Antrim, N. Ireland: I have recently returned from an 11-day visit to the States on business and was in Atlanta Georgia and New York. In New York I met Sy Oliver who was playing at the Rainbow Room which is the Roof-Top night club at the NBC building close to Radio City Music Hall. I had a drink and a nice chat with Sy and two of his band, including Buddy Smith who is a cousin of the late Charlie Fuqua, the original guitarist member of the Ink Spots.

Sy recalled one or two interesting anecdotes concerning Bing, such as the time they recorded SO TALL A TREE for Decca. The vocal group, The Aristocrats, were having problems getting their part right and one of the studio managers wanted to replace them. Bing, who had been reading a book meantime, called over to "give the kids a chance - I'm going nowhere - take your time and get the chorus worked out. Then call me when you're ready". Sy also recalled the time he gave Bing the song YES INDEED to plug on radio. This song was written for Jimmy Lunceford, the band-leader, who didn't like it. As we know, Bing and the late Connie made it into a classic.

When I met Bing in London in February 1975 I asked him about several of my favourite recordings, including DEVIL MAY CARE and MAYBE I'M WRONG AGAIN and he said he never even heard of 'em! So when I made the trip to Dublin in July I took a Decca copy of DEVIL MAY CARE to show Bing that it does exist! He remembered me and showed great interest in the record, looking at the reverse side he remarked that "this (THE SINGING HILLS) was a big hit". He kindly autographed the blue and gold label of DEVIL MAY CARE and, of course, this has now become even more precious.

Editor: We have so much evidence of Bing's excellent memory one cannot help wondering if he some times gets his tongue firmly in his cheek. "Never heard of 'em" ind eed! But that's a nice story from Barry (and Sy Oliver) about the Aristocrats....

EDWARD STURRUP, 3 Griffin Way, Sunbury-on-Thames, Midd'x: I had two tickets for the Palladium opening night but on that very night at the last moment, I had to fly to Indonesia (with Stoke City FC). The timing couldn't have been worse but it was a case of business before pleasure. We flew to Copenhagen where we had to connect with another flight to the Far East only to find that the DC 10 had some fault and we had to stay the night in Copenhagen! My thoughts were far away - in London, naturally. About 24 hours later we arrived in Singapore and whilst waiting for our last connection to Jakarta I bought the SINGAPORE TIMES to kill an hour or two and there, on page one, was a photo of Bing with a six-paragraph report on the great opening night in London! I got back in time to see the show before the fort-night ended.... could you raise again the question of the Crosby bust that was mentioned some issues back and then dropped owing to lack of support? I cannot believe that enough members would not be sufficiently interested to make this worth-while, though I know it would cost a few pennies from Heaven!

Editor: The Palladium was widely reported! Well, if anyone IS interested in the "bust of Bing" project would they please get in touch?

We were astonished to learn that Sir William Murray "the scion of one of Scotland's oldest families" has had to sell his 17th century stately home at Ochertyre. It seems several of his business ventures, including the Ochertyre Theatre, have proved disastrous. This, of course, is the gentleman with whom Bing has been closely associated. Sir William was reported as saying: "The sale is nobody's business but mine. The theatre, however, will continue on a lease that I have bought...."

TRADING POST

This is the section of the magazine wherein members may advertise their wants and disposals in the way of records, tapes, pictures, books and other Crosbyana. Advertising is free, thereby offering a unique service for members for few magazines of any kind forego revenue from advertising! But, just another facet of the entirely unique quality of Crosbyana we might well claim! Such advertisements should, however, be kept reasonably brief; if you have a long list of records, especially 78s, to dispose of it is suggested you invite members to write, enclosing SAE, for further details. It would be so easy, otherwise, to turn BING into a long list of records and that is not the desire of anyone.

Please put your adverts on a separate sheet of paper as this considerably assists collation and ensures insertion. And when in need of particular records, it would be helpful perhaps to say if a taping in lieu is acceptable. Finally, send your advertisements to the Editor - Reg Bristo.

First to hand are those "always wanted" albums BING'S HOLLYWOOD:

ROY BISSELL, 26 Charlotte Rd. Wednesbury, W. Midlands, WS10 7NE has for EXCHANGE ONLY BING 11 and 13 ("But Beautiful/Cool Cool of the Evening"). Roy wants BING 7 and 9,("Holiday Inn/Accentuate the Positive".)

TONY PEVERETT, 7 Burgh Mount, Banstead, Surrey, SM7 1ER has (a) THE ROAD TO BING CROSBY, PART 3 - this is part of the elusive complete discography (b) 45rpm MGM EP 762 BING & SATCHMO, and (c) Brunswick 45rpm EP OE 9504 HOLIDAY IN EUROPE. Offers to Tony please.

Mr. W.H.EWERT, Timber Stones,
35 Chislehurst Rd., Bickley, Kent, would very much like to buy or borrow the record TWO OF A KIND, made by the late-lamented Johnny Mercer and Bobby Darin, if anyone can help please.

Tom Colborn, 5-H Peabody Estate, Rosendale Rd. Herne Hill, London, S.E.24 recently asked about Jo Stafford records in these pages. As a result he has had a lot of enquiries about Joe's albums and wishes to say that he has learned that Music for Pleasure will be issuing a 14-track album of her in early Sept. 1977 (seems a long way off!) Songs from the early and middle 50's previously issued on Columbia and Phillips. So, something to look forward to. I must confess I didn't know MFP (or any other company, planned that far ahead - Ed.)

LES BRICE, 5, Rushgreen Gardens, Romford, Essex wants the following: LAT 8044 WHITE CHRISTMAS (the film album); LAT 8154 HIGH TOR; LA 8600 "Victor Herbert Songs"; LA 8624 "Down Memory Lane" Vol. 2; LA 8666 "George Gershwin Songs"; R. 2021 ROBIN AND THE SEVEN HOODS. I have in exchange: LAT 8118 ANYTHING GOES; LAT 8106 SHILLELAGHS & SHAMROCKS2; Amos 7001 HEY JUDE, HEY BING (unplayed American album); US Decca 7.34184 7" mini-LP stereo MERRY CHRISTMAS (6 tracks); Brunswick EPs OE 9353 "To Bali and Morrocco with Bing and Bob" OE 9424 "They Sold a Million No. 8" (four tracks by Bing) and THE ROAD TO BING CROSBY Part 3 (the discography).

Editor's Note: Part 3 of the ROAD TO BING CROSBY covers the period Oct. 1. 1943 to Mar. 27, 1951.

MRS. M. WHITAKER, 148 Montague Avenue, Oakwood, Leeds, LS8 2RJ wonders if anyone has a spare copy of the 45rpm single THE YELLOW RIBBON?

JOHN BASSETT, "Bingville", 72 Stromness Rd., Southend-on-Sea, Essex, SS2 4JQ has for Exchange: 10" US RCA-Victor LPT 5 IMMORTAL PERFORMANCES - Columbo, Crosby, Sinatra - in VG condition for any one of the following:

1) Reprise single - HOW GREEN WAS MY VALLEY.
2) US Stateside single - WHERE THE RAINBOW ENDS.
3) Phillips single - SAY ONE FOR ME.
4) Brunswick single - RAIN.
5) Gordon Macrae Capitol LP "AN EVENING AT HOME" which includes "A Perfect Day" and "Whispering Hope".

ROY BISSELL, address at the start of TRADING POST, requires back issues of BING, Nos. 20-30 incl.

LES SWEET, 8 Wyfan Place, Mynachdy, Cardiff, S. Glam: Wants WE'RE A COUPLE OF SOLDIERS: SHADOWS ON THE WINDOW: WHAT DO I CARE, ITS HOME : and I'VE GOT TO PASS YOUR HOUSE. No need to say that these are very, very, difficult to come by - the grass-roots of Bing, one might say! And tracks conspicuous by their absence in the reissue lists. Here again, tapes are readily available, however.

MRS. SYLVIA LAWRENCE, 27 Harvey Goodwin Avenue, Cambridge, CB4 3EX has the following miscellaneous new LP's for disposal and invites offers:

Alice Faye Songbook.
Alice Faye Silver Screen Star Series.
Betty Grable " " " "
Hollywood on the Air: Dick Powell 1934-51.
Radiola Company presents Hollywood on the Air, 1934-42 (lots of stars) (a 2 LP set)
Salute to the Hollywood Canteen, also lots of stars, another 2LP set.
Chick Henderson with Jos Loss and his Orchestra.

MIKE MANN, 153 Francklyn Gardens, Edgware, Midd'x has a large number of records of radio shows with Bing, Al Jolson, Judy Garland, Dick Haymes, Vic Damone and Frank Sinatra which are all NEW. As the source of these can dry up at any time he feels members may be interested - write to Mike for details.

ERIC JACKSON, 202 Barnsley Rd., Wath-upon-Dearne, Nr. Rotherham, S. Yorks has for SALE OR EXCHANGE several mint copies of HEY JUDE/HEY BING (American imports, Amos 7001). Any Crosbyana accepted.

Members are reminded it is NOT a very secure policy to send cash thro' the post unless it is at least registered mail. This indeed is Post Office advice. Crossed PO's or cheques are infinitely preferable and safer.

STAND BY! For sale: CALL ME LUCKY still in dust-cover, excellent condition: £3.25p post free - BRIAN JONES, 23, Plas Road, Fleur-de-Lys, Blackwood, GWENT. (Younger/ newer members may not know, but this is Bing's autiobiography, circa 1953/4 and a turn up like this is very, very, rare.

Would exchange BING IN HOLLYWOOD 2 LP set new, and I WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS (Warner Bros) album N- condition for the 10" LP BING SINGS VICTOR HERBERT; must be N- condition. I would also pay £6.00 for BING SINGS STEPHEN FOSTER in N- condition. NOEL J. MOULD, 16 Sussex Court, Antrim, N. Ireland.

PLEASE! Can anyone help with any or ALL of BING'S HOLLYWOOD? Mervyn J. Thomas, 52, Gratwicke Rd., Worthing, Sussex.

FRANK MURPHY, address inside front cover, offers BINGPICS, a large gallery of photographs of Bing and family. The full range has appeared in a recent BING; new members will get the list with this issue.

JOHN C. PYNE 249 Oriel Rd., Heidelberg West 3081, Melbourne, Victoria, AUSTRALIA: I would like to buy (at reasonable prices please) CPS80 and CPS 112, Bing and the Andrews Sisters Vols 1 and 3, that is. They are not available in Australia and as I have managed to axquire Vol. 2 I am very anxious to get the other two. Help would be much appreciated. (What a nice surprise for John if someone can help - before he even gets his copy of this issue! - Ed.)

Our good friend KEITH PARKINSON was responsible for the following which appeared, complete with photograph of Bing, in the INTERNATIONAL FILM COLLECTOR SUMMER ANNUAL 1976:

B I N G C R O S B Y

Fifty years ago this year, HARRY LILLIS CROSBY set foot in a recording studio and took the first step towards becoming an entertainment legend. Since then, BING has conquered the record business with more record sales than any other vocalist, the film industry with around a hundred movies to his credit, radio, where he could be heard weekly for almost twenty years, and television, where he has appeared in about a dozen shows a year since the early Sixties. One of his little known show business contributions is that he introduced recording tape as a means of avoiding the problems of 'live' radio in the Forties.

BING'S movie highlights include his Oscar winning priest in GOING MY WAY and a series of ROAD films with Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour which stand up well to regular revivals on television. He starred in Paramount's first Vista-vision film, WHITE CHRISTMAS, which was also his biggest box-office movie, and he last appeared in THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT. Now aged 75 but insisting he's only 72, he plans to continue appearing on television, visiting the recording studios whenever a project interests him and maybe making another ROAD film with Bob Hope if golfing commitments permit.

If you are a film buff as well as a Bing one, you can obtain this annual from: JOHN WALTER SKINNER, I.F.C., 15 Wallace Avenue, Worthing, BN11 5RA, Sussex. The price is £2.30p post paid.

A Sheffield paper, THE STAR, is running a big-instalment feature on Bing by one Peter Markie, based on Chas. Thompson's book, BING. It is a weekly project and is profusely illustrated with pictures that did not appear in the book - Bing on the golf-course, with the Rhythm Boys, on his ranch, in films, radio and so on. The first 4-page effort appeared on Nov. 2 , the second on Nov. 27. No doubt it will go on at weekly intervals, i.e. the next will be Dec. 4. It seems this may very well be a syndicated feature, in which case it will appear in many provincial newspapers. If, however, you would like it (the paper only costs 7p!) it is published by Sheffield Newspapers, York St. Sheffield - doubtless they would supply back nos. It is certainly an attractive feature for those who collect such things - and my thanks to the Sheffield member who is sending it to us without giving his name!

YES INDEED!

Quite a year, 1976, writes JOHN BIGNELL who feels a virtual lifelong enthusiam for Bing and other things has been well rewarded..

Oh yes, and much as we have proclaimed 1976, there's no reason why we shouldn't make sure there's no doubt about it! Nearing my own demi-centenary I have to admit that the year whose days are now numbered will always stand out as one of those the memories of which will sustain one thro' whatever lies before us in the (hopefully) distant future. And it makes me think of other "good" years too, for there have been some. In my case, there was 1942 in the dim and distant past when Bing was - tho' none of us knew it then - launching the world's most famous gramophone record and I was a fourteen-year-old soccer fanatic (my "twin" abiding absorption) lucky enough to get a ticket to see dear old Brentford win the London War Cup by beating Portsmouth 2-0 at Wembley Stadium.

And it was the year that my attention was claimed by Bing for the first time; and after 34 years plus the signs are only that that attention will continue to be rivetted on the incredible Mr. C. with increasing fervour.

There was 1948 - "demob" year for me and another lovely sporting surprise occasioned by a totally unexpected ticket to see the FA Cup Final when Manchester Utd defeated Blackpool by 4-2 - and later in the same month a blissful afternoon at Lords in the free seats (!) to see the Middlesex "twins" Denis Compton and Bill Edrich thrash the poor Somerset bowlers for a record-breaking 421 runs in about four hours....memories! I hope the Somerset members won't be too pained at that particular memory....

1955 stands out as a particularly happy year for it was another long hot summer - and the year in which I got engaged to the lady who has now gallantly put up with me and my enthusiasms for twenty years - as my wife, of course! Jean, for that is her name, would certainly share my happy recollections of 1962 when we moved at last into our own home after years of rented make-shift - not unhappy mind, but not, obviously, the goal. And of course we could go on and on about the happy years, or the special years.

But the point I think I'm making is that all through these years the ever-increasing interest in things Bing provided a perfect, accompanying, musical background as it were. The very lucky "break" which enabled me to discover the existence of the International Crosby Circle in 1974 certainly paved the way for the incredible era of Crosbyana that was just about to burst into all our lives again. 1975 was the year I, with so many others, saw Bing for the first time ever in the BBC TV studios at Shepherds Bush when he did the second of his celebrated Parkinson Shows. Surely this was the realisation of my highest ambition? But no - and its not only with hindsight, I am certain, that the feeling persisted that something even more exciting was coming in 1976. And it did.

The news in March that threw us into a strange mixture of delight, panic, apprehension ("Will I GET there?) came like a bombshell: Bing was going to do a 2-week stint at the London Palladium! And this soon after we had the news, received with a dull numbness, that Bing was undergoing major surgery - but I'm only dealing with the good times. And perhaps that severe illness has no little bearing on what has happened since? 'Tis said good comes out of bad. Whatever the cause we had the dream-like situation which really turned into solid fact.

On a personal note again, out of the blue I had that request to appear on the BBC's Radio 4 TODAY programme to talk about Bing. Me to talk about Bing, truly a wondrous thing for me - Saturday April 10 was the unforgettable date. And a few weeks later in May the football club with which I have been associated for so many years (North Brentford Utd) appeared in no less than three cup finals. Then, the agonised waiting for news of tickets for the Palladium was ended when tickets arrived from three sources!

A mid-June holiday in Devon - and back for the opening night of June 21st. Pat

Forster confided to me in the foyer: "I think Bing may well apear BEFORE the interval..."And there we sat, open-mouthed in the front stalls as he strode on stage when the orchestra was barely under way with BLUE OF THE NIGHT...nothing, but nothing, can match that two weeks, can it? And it WAS the loveliest, hottest, driest, summer for - what? - 500 years?

My summer also took in a splendid day at Sunningdale on August 4 - Bing in carefree mood in a not too serious mixed foursome with a fair-sized following which included Leslie Gaylor, Phil Clarke, and others in addition to myself and Jean; it was the day, also, that I exchanged my first few words with Bing and obtained his autograph on the June copy of BING.

And now we are still receiving the legacies from that summer - FEELS GOOD; and certainly sounds good, while after a nail-biting delay the K-Tel sponsored BING CROSBY LIVE AT THE PALLADIUM is with us! What a way to relive that glorious night of June - at CHRISTMAS! Another night at the Palladium....Ken Barnes deserves an Oscar or whatever record-produwers SHOULD get for monumental projects - the fidelity of the sound, the contents and the wonderfully informative sleeve notes make this the bargain, at £3.99p, the bargain of 1976 - or any other year. And how right Bing was to insist that a deal be struck with Decca to include MORNING GLORIES and CUANDO CALIENTE EL SOL both an integral part of the show which would have been sadly missed had they been omitted. A permanent, vi d, sound-picture of a night none of us would forget anyway. I know Bert Bishop will be reviewing this in depth and I hope he will forgive my small rave.... It has been, as I said at the start, quite a year.

Pat Forster - another of the boons of Crosbyana for me is the friends one makes - had a most charming reply from Bing to a very individual greetings card she sent to mark Bing's 50th anniversary - and Bing actually replied to Pat on the 18th October.

Editor: Bert Bishop certainly will review the Palladium opus in depth - but not, alas, in this issue. Its late appearance - it STILL isn't in S. Wales on December 3rd - coinciding with a family requirement for your Editor to dash away from home until nearly Christmas itself means we cannot wait a day longer. If we did - there would be no Christmas issue until AFTER Christmas. And that is not even remotely to be considered. But it seems the "Live" album is everywhere but here; Ken Crossland up in Ossett, Yorks writes too: "What a relief to find the Palladium album is not cut in any way - as was feared it may be at one time. It really does take you back to June - even the sticky heat seems to be present! Its a wonderful graphic production - and WHEN A CHILD IS BORN, the new single, is a magnificent piece of singing by Bing. Bing really is in excellent voice.....

A late note tells me that in addition to his solo broadcast on Oct. 18, Les Gaylor did another with PHIL CLARKE over Radio Victory (Portsmouth) on Oct.15...truly, its all happening!

Word from EMI/MCA about their reissue album BING & CO may not now be out before Christmas, although they are hoping. Seems to be some hold-up with the sleeve artwork. Now, I'm bemused with all these records - did we list the titles? Yes, we did in the last issue.....well, if it is delayed, it'll give the pocket time to recover from the battering its had from all the Crosby records happily pouring out...

DON'T FORGET TO GET IN QUICKLY FOR YOUR NEW BING TIE!

Many readers appear to have got the SPOKANE LPs fairly sharply; I'm still awaiting mine. More important, they seem highly enthusiastic about them; when writing to LARRY KINER you must include the remittance...see last issue. Larry's address if you cannot obtain these rare LPs is KINER ENTERPRISES, PO BOX 724, Redmond, Washington 98052, USA. The cost for the 7 albums is 6.98 dollars, plus 4 dollars postage; th exchange rate of around 1.69 dollars for the £ is not exactly favourable.....
approx. £6.70p

BING ON THE BOX - Radio and TV matters on Mr. C - by BERT BISHOP

After last year's Christmas Bing bonanza it is hardly likely we shall have another to match it though we are aware that Bing telerecorded a Christmas Special in the UK (in July!) for showing here - pictures have appeared in the press showing Mr. C. garbed as Santa himself. At least one other was prepared for screening in the States featuring Jackie Gleason and Bernadette Petters going out on Dec. 1 via CBS. Whether or not a Crosby film is scheduled at home is not known but if so it won't be WHITE CHRISTMAS which operates on a once-every-three years footing; nor is it likely to be of any real vintage for colour seems to be an essential ingredient for Christmas film-fare. Time perhaps that ROBIN AND THE SEVEN HOODS had another screening - Bing stealing every scene in which he appeared, especially in the STYLE and MR. BOOZE sequences - apart from the final scene pay-off.

So, we'll have to wait for the March issue before we can assess the Crosby aspects of this Christmas a'coming, and in the meantime content ourselves with a round-up of the events on the airwaves during the past 3 months; a period which, of course, includes the historic 18 November anniversary.

ITV had a double Bing bill on 5 Sept. when STARS ON SUNDAY compered this time by Robt. Dougall had Bing with a Bible reading from St. Matthew, Chap. 7, being a repeat of Bing's contribution to this programme on 16 November 1975 when Wilfred and Mabel Pickles were the hosts. Later in the evening there came a screening of the film LET'S MAKE LOVE of 1960 vintage starring Marilyn Monroe and Yves Montand. Bing was one of 3 unbilled guests who were engaged, for the purposes of the plot, to make the leading man more attractive to the leading lady in the fields of comedy, song and dance. Montand had already flunked Milton Berle's comedy course before Bing tried to coax a little melody from his larynx by way of the song INCURABLY ROMANTIC. But the Frenchman was no Charles Aznavour (even if you like HIM!) and with barely concealed exasperation Bing hands Montand over to Gene Kelly for the fancy footwork - another fruitless exercise for the despairing suitor; but amusing for the cinema/TV audience. In Aug. 1960 Bing recorded the song, it being a nice ballad.

Came October and the expected clutch of Crosby tributes was very much in evidence... mostly by radio. Not all have been noted and recorded by your contributor, so I'd be grateful to learn of those that have, inevitably, been missed. Early in the month, 3rd October, BBC R-2 put out their Part 17 of HOORAY FOR HOLLYWOOD - 'The Oscar-Winning Song-book' the entire series being a celebration of fifty years of film musicals, which is a happy coincidence for the presentation of this particularly Bing-oriented programme. The substance, as the title suggests, was the film songs which have won Oscars, narrated by Doug Fairbanks Jnr with the voices of writers, composers and film celebrities.

Its not surprising that Fred Astaire had already been successful in the award-winning department for he has introduced more 'standards' on stage and in films than any other artist. However, it is rather ironic that Bob Hope was also to beat Bing to the winning post with what was to become his signature tune, THANKS FOR THE MEMORY, from the film THE BIG BROADCAST OF 1938, despite some memorable songs from Johnny Burke and James Monaco.

Bing has presented on screen four Academy Award-winning songs: WHITE CHRISTMAS from the 1942 HOLIDAY INN; SWINGING ON A STAR from the 1944 GOING MY WAY, and IN THE COOL, COOL, COOL OF THE EVENING from the 1951 HERE COMES THE GROOM (a song originally written by Johnny Mercer for Betty Hutton in a film with the proposed title of THE MACK SENNETT GIRLS); Bing lost out to Fred Astaire with PENNIES FROM HEAVEN when Fred came out on top with the Dorothy Fields/Jerome Kern composition THE WAY YOU LOOK TONIGHT in 1936; but in 1937 Bing had his first success for composer Harry Owens with the fairly ordinary song SWEET LEILANI - ordinary, that is, by comparison with what was being written in those 'golden years' of popular music.

It was with the year 1937 that the second half of this 1-hour programme was concerned mainly, with Fairbanks putting the listener in the role of an Oscar adjudicator by

playing all the film songs that were in the running for the year - a list which read I'VE GOT MY LOVE TO KEEP ME WARM: THE FOLKS WHO LIVE ON THE HILL: SEPTEMBER IN THE RAIN: TOO MARVELLOUS FOR WORDS: IN THE STILL OF THE NIGHT: THEY ALL LAUGHED: A FOGGY DAY: and another great Astaire song, Gershwin's THEY CAN'T TAKE THAT AWAY FROM ME. Golden years indeed, a formidable list. Now, that last song was a firm favourite to win and was actually being played when the envelope was opened to announce that SWEET LEILANI - a real outsider - had been chosen. Geo. Gershwin was, I think rightly, very disappointed at the decision and on this programme his brother proffered a very valid reason as to why the Harry Owens composition had emerged as the winner:

"In those days the 'extras' were allowed to vote, and Bing Crosby was a great favourite - and he had sung that song."

Other reasons were given by two film producers; firstly by Pandro Berman producer of Astaire's films: "Sweet Leilani was Bing Crosby's hit, and Bing Crosby made everything good." Secondly, George Sidney: "I think we were going through our Hawaiian period - everything was Hawaiian and Bing did a great recording."

"Radio Times" for the anniversary week had the Saturday paragraph in its THIS WEEK column devoted to Bing...'50 Years of Groaning' it was headed and went on to note that on Radio 2 at 12.20 that day there was a special one-hour programme, SOLID GOLD BING introduced by Bob Hope celebrating Bing's half-century on disc. Furthermore, there was practically half of the Radio 2 page devoted to the programme and event by way of a 'Forties photograph of him which carried the inscription "To Radio Times, Sincerely, Bing Crosby" This formed part of a montage designed to illustrate Bob Hope's written introduction: "I'm delighted to be able to talk about Bing's career, its a large slice of show business history", he interpolated between Hope-Crosby type jokes.

The programme followed a rather familiar pattern, using material that has been heard previously in recent years' programmes dedicated to Bing. The only new material was Hope's linking dialogue; Ken Barnes relating the origin of the tie-up with United Artists, and a final word from Bing himself. The title indicates that Bing's recording career was mainly illustrated with his "golden years" (again that coined phrase) when between 1937 and 1956 he acquired 22 gold discs for the sale of a million (or more) copies of singles, and one LP - MERRY CHRISTMAS. The statements made were not always accurate - the most startling inaccuracy being that Bing made two recordings on 26 Oct. 1949 - DEAR HEARTS AND GENTLE PEOPLE and McNAMARA'S BAND both of which were to bring him Gold Records. In fact, the second recording for that date was MULE TRAIN which did not bring the coveted award. McNAMARA'S BAND did, of course, but that was waxed in 1946. However, Chas. Thompson wrote the script and as his book illustrates his "facts" are known to be suspect in several instances. Bix in the Dorseys Orchestra? Surely not...

There was also a little cheating in the featured records; the 1935 version of SILENT NIGHT being suggested as the Gold version (actually 1942) and Bing with Buddy Cole in 1954 standing in for the original SWEET LEILANI of 1937. It is inevitable that a review in BING will be concerned with the inaccuracies as new members are coming along all the time and this is the place wherein a true chronicle should be found. But in so doing, we must not lose sight of the fact that the programme was aimed at the general listening public and in that respect it can be considered to have been quite well compiled and presented; happy indeed that the occasion was not overlooked by the BBC.

Above and beyond the 'golds' there were a few early recordings and a couple of the most recent for United Artists. Bing's career was picked up in his Gonzaga days when as an aspiring drummer he joined the Musicaladers in that capacity; from thereon the recording story was unfolded by Bing himself, Al Rinker, Lewis Alter (composer of MY KINDA LOVE), Fred Astaire, Dave Kapp (brother of Jack of US Decca), John Scott Trotter, Irving Berlin, Jimmy Van Heusen, Sammy Cahn, Andy Williams, Milt Gabler (A & R man for Decca) Patty Andrews, Sonny Burke (record producer), Ray Turner (pianist), Princess Grace de Monaco and Ken Barnes. Bob Hope left the jokes aside in the dialogue (just one joke about Bing's ears) and was suitably affectionate and 'straight'.....

And there, regrettably, we have to finish for the time being: with a final HAPPY CHRISTMAS from all of us to all of YOU.